



THE
LIFE AND TIMES
OF
QUEEN VICTORIA







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HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

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THE
LIFE AND TIMES
OF
QUEEN VICTORIA.

BY
ROBERT WILSON.

Illustrated.

VOL. I.



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EDITORIAL NOTE.

THE first Eleven Chapters of this Work are from the pen of the late MR. EDMUND OLLIER, to whom the Publishers originally entrusted the commission to write it—a commission which he was compelled to resign by the illness which terminated in his lamented death.

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DISTANT VIEW OF WINDSOR CASTLE.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY YEARS OF THE PRINCESS VICTORIA.

A Remarkable Visit to Kensington Palace—Death of King William IV.—Details of his Last Days—Parliamentary Eulogies on his Character—Progress in the Last Half-Century—Ancestry of Queen Victoria—Her Descent traced to Odoacer, King of Italy—Saxon Ancestors of her Majesty—Liberal Views of the Duke of Kent, Father of the Queen—State of the Succession after the Death of the Princess Charlotte—Marriage of the Duke of Kent, and Birth of the Princess Victoria—Christening at Kensington Palace—The name “Victoria,” and its Associations—Death of the Duke of Kent—Kensington Palace in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries—Early Training of Victoria by her Mother—Child-life of the Princess—False Rumours of Ill-health—Anecdotes of Juvenile Years—The Princess and George IV.—Accession of William IV.—The Regency Bill—Prince Leopold and the Throne of Belgium—Studies of the Princess—Her Life of Retirement—Home Tours in Various Parts of England—Visit to the Cotton Mills of the Messrs. Strutt at Belper—Reception at Oxford and at Southampton—Benevolence to an Actress—Her Royal Highness declared of Age on the 24th of May, 1837.



THE ROYAL ARMS.

In the dawn of June 20th, 1837, immediately after the death of King William IV., the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Howley) and the Lord Chamberlain (the Marquis of Conyngham) left Windsor for Kensington, to convey the tidings to his late Majesty's successor. They reached the Palace about five o'clock in the morning, and knocked, rang, and beat at the doors several times before they could obtain admission. When at length the porter was aroused, the visitors

were shown into one of the lower rooms, where a long time passed without any attention being paid them. Growing impatient, they rang the bell (as we read in the interesting narrative of Miss Wynn), and desired that the attendant on the Princess Victoria might be sent to inform her Royal Highness that they requested an audience on business of importance. Another long delay ensued, and again the bell was rung, that some explanation might be given of the difficulty which appeared to exist. On the Princess's attendant making her appearance, she declared that her Royal Highness was in so sweet a sleep that she could not venture to disturb her. It was now evident that stronger measures must be taken, and one of the visitors said, "We have come on business of State to the *Queen*, and even her sleep must give way to that." The attendant disappeared, and a few minutes afterwards the young sovereign came into the room in a loose white robe and shawl, her fair hair falling over her shoulders, her feet in slippers, her eyes dim with tears, but her aspect perfectly calm and dignified.* Lord Melbourne, the Prime Minister, was at once sent for, and arrived at nine o'clock, when, after an interview of half an hour with the Queen, he addressed himself to a rapid study of the ceremonials to be observed at the approaching Privy Council. Some time after, the Lord Mayor and other members of the Corporation reached the Palace, and the chief members of the Privy Council soon thronged the rooms.

Although the final illness of the late King had been rather brief, William had for some time been in declining health, and the nation had only to hope that his life would be prolonged until his niece, the Princess Victoria, had attained an age which could be regarded as constituting her majority. This had occurred on the 24th of the previous month, when the Princess completed her eighteenth year, which had been declared by Act of Parliament to be sufficient. William IV. was a man of very moderate abilities; but a certain simplicity and geniality of character had secured for him the regard and respect of the people, and had carried him through the revolutionary epoch of the Reform Bill with no great loss of popularity, even at a time when he was supposed to be unfriendly to the measure. For the last two years he had ceased to take any interest in the political tendencies of the day, while discharging the routine duties of his high office with conscientious regularity. Brought up in the midst of totally different ideas, he could not, at his time of life, accommodate himself to the flood of novel principles which had recently set in, and which he was equally unable to accept and powerless to resist. The result was that, as a well-qualified observer records, "he submitted to what he could not help, but evidently with a sense of weariness."† In the previous April he had been distressed by the death of his eldest daughter, Lady de Lisle, and of the Duchess-Dowager of Saxe-Meiningen, mother of Queen Adelaide. Great physical prostration ensued shortly afterwards, and by June it was evident that the end could not be far

* Diaries of a Lady of Quality, by Miss Frances Williams Wynn. 1864.

† Memoirs of the Courts and Cabinets of William IV. and Victoria, by the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos. 1861.

distant. His Majesty was attended by the Queen with the most affectionate devotion; but the weakness steadily increased, and soon reached a fatal termination.

Owing to the state of the King's health, the Duke of Wellington proposed to dispense with the usual Waterloo Banquet at Apsley House; but on the 17th of June the dying monarch sent a message to the illustrious Field-Marshal, desiring that the occasion should be observed in the customary manner, and wishing the host and guests a pleasant day. On the anniversary of the great battle (the 18th), the Duke transmitted to Windsor, in accordance with the prescribed form, the banner by the presentation of which he held his estates. Lord Muncaster presented it to the King, who, raising himself up, grasped the folds of the flag, and exclaimed, "Ah! that was a glorious day for England!"* The eulogies pronounced in Parliament on the character of the deceased sovereign may have been somewhat affected by the conventional or official tone inseparable from such utterances; but they probably contain a fair amount of truth, with no more than the usual omissions. The disposition of William IV. was certainly superior to that of his brother George; and the country recognised the difference with the true instinct of a free people.

The Modern Age, in its most distinctive developments, is almost coeval with the reign of his successor. It is true that the Railway service had already begun; but it was still in its infancy when Queen Victoria ascended the throne, and had not yet effected any great revolution in the sentiments or habits of society. The Electric Telegraph, though fully born in the brains of scientific speculators, had received no practical application. Steam and machinery had still to achieve some of their greatest triumphs. The Postal system of those days seems barbarian to our modern eyes. The Newspaper Press was an insignificant force compared with what it is at the present day. Education, in the popular sense, hardly existed. Nation with nation held but little intercourse, and the prejudices of Englishmen were scarcely less gross than they had been in the days of Hogarth. Manners were far more coarse and brutal than they are now; the laws were more complicated and uncertain; social order was less secure; the arts had not attained so wide and general a culture; medicine, surgery, chemistry, geology, and other sciences, were less cultivated; taste was less diffused and less instructed; the luxuries, and even the comforts, of domestic life were almost unknown to the poorer classes; and political power was held by only a small proportion of the community. The England of 1837 was so different from the England we now behold, that the "Pickwick Papers," belonging to that date, require explanatory notes for the benefit of a younger generation. The history of these vast changes—in which the personal character and influence of her Majesty have had no small share—must be of the deepest interest to all thinking men; and it is this history which we propose to relate.

* Memoirs of an Ex-Minister, by the Right Hon. the Earl of Malmesbury. 1884.

ALEXANDRINA VICTORIA, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, and Empress of India, was born at Kensington Palace on the 24th of May, 1819. She is the daughter of Edward, Duke of Kent, fourth son of King George III.; and her mother was Victoria Mary Louisa, daughter of his Serene Highness Francis, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld. The Duke of Kent was the second husband of this lady, who in 1802 had married Charles Louis, Prince of



WEST FRONT OF KENSINGTON PALACE.

Leiningen—an ill-assorted match, productive of no happiness. The second marriage took place in 1818; but the Duke of Kent died in less than two years. Her Majesty's descent is very illustrious. It may be traced (conjecturally, at least) up to Odoacer, a warlike chief of the Heruli, who, after defeating the forces of Romulus Augustulus, the last Roman Emperor of the West, in the year 476 of the Christian era, disputed the kingdom of Italy with Theodoric the Ostrogoth. One of the supposed descendants of Odoacer was Boniface, Count of Lucca and Duke of Tuscany, who lived in the early part of the ninth century, and from whom sprang Alberto Azzo II., Marquis of Italy and Lord of Este, who, in the first half of the eleventh century, married Cunegonda, of the House of Guelph, by whom he had Guelph, Duke of Bavaria,

the ancestor of the House of Brunswick, and consequently of the present Royal Family of Great Britain, who are called Este-Guelphs. According to some accounts, however, the Guelphs are derived from a younger brother of Odoacer, whose son, Olfigandus, held a command in the army of Belisarius. But in truth



KING WILLIAM IV.

these matters lie beyond verification, and are interesting only as affording a shadowy link between the present and the past.

One of the most famous ancestors of the Duchess of Kent, and therefore of Queen Victoria herself, was Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony in the early years of the sixteenth century, who ranks among the first converts to Protestantism, and who befriended Luther when that great reformer stood in peril of his life. The Prince Consort was likewise descended from the same family, and the Queen's children are thus doubly connected with one of the most

distinguished German houses of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In later times, various members of the Saxon family have shown their prowess as warriors, or their capacity as rulers; but the father of the Duchess of Kent, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, was a man of pacific inclinations and retiring habits, with a taste for the fine arts. The Duke of Kent was remarkable as a generous supporter of popular government—even to an extreme bordering on democratic ideas—at a time when the Court and the ruling classes were fanatically enthusiastic on the Tory side. Tall and striking in aspect, trained to military service, irreproachable in private life, and exact in all his business habits, the Duke of Kent inherited the manly and sedate qualities of his father, George III., while superadding to them a breadth of intellect to which the King himself could advance no claim. As a commander in the British army, his Royal Highness incurred some temporary disfavour by his strictness as a disciplinarian; but this was afterwards removed by the liberal character of his political views. At a banquet, during which he replied to the toast of “The Junior Members of the Royal Family,” he said:—“I am a friend of civil and religious liberty, all the world over. I am an enemy to all religious tests. I am a supporter of a general system of education. All men are my brethren; and I hold that power is delegated only for the benefit of the people. These are the principles of myself, and of my beloved brother, the Duke of Sussex. They are not popular principles just now; that is, they do not conduct to place or office. *All* the members of the Royal Family do not hold the same principles. For this I do not blame them; but we claim for ourselves the right of thinking and acting as we think best.”

Like some of the other Royal Princes, the Duke of Kent refrained from marriage until after the death of the Princess Charlotte, on the 6th of November, 1817. That ill-fated lady—the only child of the Prince Regent, afterwards George IV.—had been married, on the 2nd of May, 1816, to Prince Leopold, third son of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, and brother of the Princess who was subsequently united to the Duke of Kent, and became the mother of our Queen. Leopold (who, several years later, was chosen King of the Belgians) was distinguished, from his earliest maturity to his latest days, by high character and distinguished abilities; and the English people hoped much from a union which seemed to promise so fairly. But, unhappily, the Princess Charlotte died in childbed; and, as the infant was still-born, the succession to the throne was left in a very precarious state. Accordingly, in the following year (1818), the Duke of Clarence, third son of George III., and afterwards William IV., the Duke of Kent, fourth son, and the Duke of Cambridge, seventh son, contracted nuptial alliances; but that of the Duke of Clarence, the elder brother of the Duke of Kent, was unattended by any issue that survived, so that the Princess Victoria soon became heiress-presumptive to the crown of Great Britain.

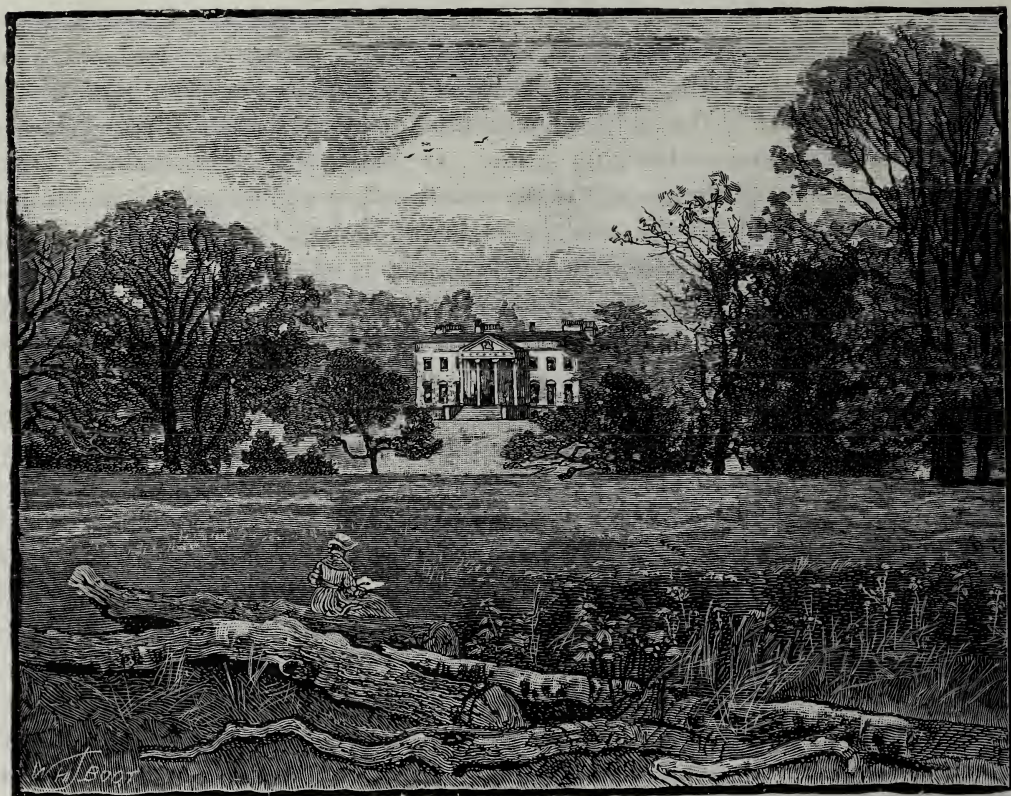
For some time after their marriage, the Duke and Duchess of Kent resided abroad, chiefly from motives of economy, the allowance of the former being

restricted within narrow limits by the servile Parliament of that day, owing to his political independence. In view, however, of an expected event, the Royal couple returned to England in the latter part of April, 1819, so that their child should be "born a Briton;" and, as we have said, the future Queen of England drew her first breath on the 24th of May. The Duke of Kent had been long estranged from his brother, the Prince Regent; but a reconciliation took place shortly after the birth of the Princess Victoria. The infant was christened on the 24th of June at Kensington Palace, where she had been born; on which occasion, the gold font was brought from the Tower, and the draperies were removed from the Chapel Royal, St. James's. Chief among the sponsors were the Prince Regent and the Emperor Alexander of Russia, the latter represented by the Duke of York. It was in compliment to the Czar that the infant Princess received Alexandrina as her first name. In subsequent years, however, this Russianised Greek appellation was wisely abandoned, as unfamiliar and unwelcome to English ears, and the far nobler-sounding "Victoria" took its place. The second name, now famous throughout the world, is of course pure Latin, and no more native to our race than Alexandrina. But in a certain sense we are all Latins—we of the West of Europe; and the accents of the Imperial tongue are familiar to our ears. The meaning and sound of "Victoria," moreover, are strikingly appropriate to the sovereign of a great Empire; and the omen has, on the whole, been happily fulfilled under the sceptre of her Majesty, not merely in the triumphs of war, but also in the victories of peace.

It is not generally known, that, so far as can be inferred from imperfect and obscure records, a monarch bearing the name of Victoria once before held sway in Britain. During the general weakness of the Roman Empire in the second half of the third century, several of the provinces detached themselves from the central authority, and for a while established separate governments. Spain, Gaul, and Britain formed a western realm of immense extent, the capital of which was at Trèves, on the Moselle, then a city of Gallia Belgica; and the sovereignty of this varied region passed in time to an ambitious and energetic woman named Victoria. She is mentioned in the great work of Gibbon; yet little is known of her acts or character. It is probable that she was a resolute and capable despot; but she appears in history as a name, and little else.

For the brief remainder of his life, the Duke of Kent dwelt principally at Claremont, which, but a short time before, had been the residence of the Princess Charlotte and Prince Leopold, and which was rendered sadly memorable by the death of the former. But the unusually severe winter of 1819-20 induced the Duke and Duchess to visit Sidmouth, for the sake of the mild climate of Southern Devonshire. At Salisbury Cathedral, to which he made an excursion during the frosty weather, the Duke caught a slight cold, which, after his return to Sidmouth, became serious, owing, it would seem, to neglect and imprudence. According to the medical custom of those days, the patient was copiously bled, and not improbably owed his death to the exhaustion thus occasioned. He expired on the

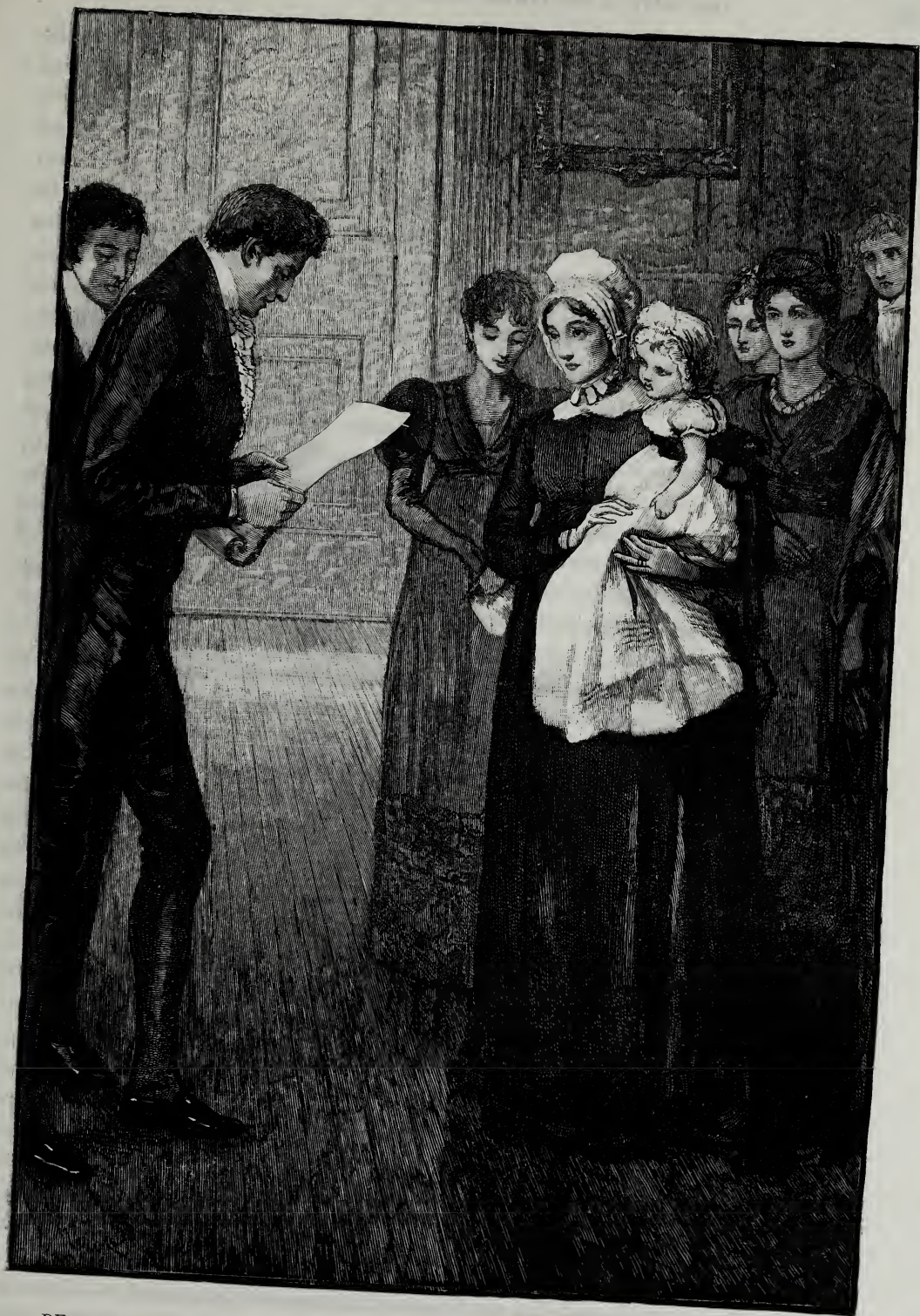
23rd of January, 1820, in his fifty-third year; and so small were his means that he left the Duchess and the Princess totally devoid of maintenance. Such was the statement made long afterwards by Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, who was with his sister during the days of her trial and bereavement. Soon after the fatal event, the Prince accompanied the widowed lady to London, where addresses of condolence were voted by both Houses of Parliament. The address of the Commons was presented by Lords Morpeth and Clive, when the Duchess of Kent



CLAREMONT.

appeared with the infant Princess in her arms. The scene was one of the chambers in Kensington Palace; and that historic building can scarcely have witnessed a more affecting interview.

The edifice in which Queen Victoria passed most of her early years, and which yet attracts the interest both of Englishmen and Americans, dates, as a palace, from the time of William III., though, at a rather earlier period, the Finches, Earls of Nottingham, had a mansion on the same spot, of which a small portion is believed to be still existent. The second Earl of Nottingham sold the house and grounds to the illustrious Dutchman who came to rescue us from the Pope and the Stuarts; and his Majesty caused additions to be made to the building by the greatest English architect of that time—Sir Christopher Wren. Successive



DEATH OF THE DUKE OF KENT: PRESENTING THE COMMONS' ADDRESS OF
CONDOLENCE TO THE DUCHESS AT KENSINGTON PALACE. (See p. 8.)

sovereigns, down to George II., still further enlarged the domicile and the grounds; and, for sixty years of the eighteenth century, Kensington Palace was the most brilliant and courtly place in London. All the nobles, statesmen, wits, and beauties of the age assembled in its saloons, or paraded in its gardens. Many are the anecdotes (scandalous and otherwise) connected with this royal home; but there are pleasanter associations too. Tickell, one of the minor *literati* of the period which we associate with Queen Anne, though it extended into the reigns of George I. and his successor, wrote a pretty fairy tale, in verse, in connection with Kensington Gardens; and Pope may have studied in that courtly enclosure the belles and fops of his "Rape of the Lock." In the Palace itself, Death was a frequent visitor, as he must be in houses which survive several generations. William III. and Queen Mary, Queen Anne, Prince George of Denmark, and King George II., all died within its walls; and then came an eclipse. The sedate and formal residence, with its stately gardens, fell out of favour with George III., though it is not easy to say why, since his own character inclined him to the formal and sedate. All the glancing lights of wit and beauty faded from its rooms; and, by the earlier years of the present century, the Palace had acquired the sombre and somewhat depressing character inseparable from all old buildings which have seen better days, and from which the laughter and the life of earlier times have passed away.

Such were the surroundings amongst which the Princess Victoria was brought up. They were far from inspiring; yet they may have helped to form the character of the future Queen, and to give to it an element of gravity, not unbecoming the sovereign of countless myriads. The walls of the apartments were adorned with pictures belonging chiefly to the Byzantine and early German schools; and these probably did much in creating a taste for art. The training of the young Princess was conducted by her mother—a task for which she was admirably qualified. When the Prince of Leiningen died, in 1814, his widow, afterwards the Duchess of Kent, was left the guardian of her young sons, and the ruler of their territory until they came of age. These duties she had performed in a manner the most exemplary; and she afterwards showed equal good sense in the education of the Princess Victoria. The child was taught from her earliest years to rely on exercise and temperance as the best promoters of health; to devote a reasonable amount of time to riding and sailing; to be economical, yet charitable; and, while observing a courteous demeanour towards her inferiors, to keep aloof from the evil influence of parasites. In early years, it was rather the moral than the mental nature of the Princess that was cultivated. The Dowager-Duchess of Coburg wisely wrote to her daughter, in 1823, that it would be better not to force book-knowledge too soon on one so young; and this advice appears to have been followed.

As her Royal Highness grew up, however, she was well grounded in languages, music, and such branches of science as were then thought suitable to ladies. Her general education was afterwards entrusted to the Duchess of Northumberland,

wife of the third Duke; and the Princess speedily developed many charming qualities. Living for the most part in retirement, she was but little known to the outer world; but her affability made an excellent impression on all with whom she came in contact. Her character was to some extent influenced by the great philanthropist, William Wilberforce, whom she saw very frequently. Several pleasing anecdotes are related of her charity and kindness; and it is said that in her visits to Ramsgate she was a great favourite with the bathing-women and other characteristic frequenters of the sands. When, a little later in life, it became nearly certain that she would succeed to the throne, owing to the childlessness of her father's elder brothers, the Princess emerged more into public view, and took her rides and walks in places where she could be generally seen. It is said that, for some years, George IV. treated his sister-in-law and her infant with marked coldness; but the Duke and Duchess of Clarence—whose own disappointments, in the failure of offspring, might have furnished some slight excuse for neglect—showed much kindness to the Duchess of Kent and the Princess Victoria. This cordial sentiment continued after the accession of William IV., and the Queen never forgot, in later days, the respect and affection which she owed to Adelaide.

The early years of the Princess were passed under healthful conditions, and resulted in the formation of a strong constitution. Nevertheless, the public were disquieted by rumours to the effect that the daughter of the Duke of Kent would never attain her majority, or that, at any rate, if she lived to marry, she would never become the mother of a family. In proportion as these statements were believed, fears arose that the succession would pass to the Duke of Cumberland—a prince very generally disliked for his arrogance, and for faults and vices which may perhaps have been exaggerated by popular hatred. The connection between the kingdoms of Great Britain and Hanover—which would have been perpetuated by the succession of any one of the Princes, but which the existence of the Salic Law in the latter State rendered incompatible with the accession of a female sovereign in England—was another contingency which the people of this country regarded with the utmost distaste. For these reasons, the false reports concerning the Princess's health created no little agitation. But it soon came to the public knowledge that the unwelcome tidings were wholly false; and it was evident, from her frequent appearances in the streets and parks, that the heiress-apparent to the British throne was not likely to die prematurely.

The studies of the Princess were pursued with a fair amount of diligence, though her Royal Highness would occasionally show her independence by refusing to be too closely bound by rules. On one occasion, she objected to that dull, mechanical practising of notes which the young learner of the pianoforte has perforce to undergo. She was told that this was necessary before she could become mistress of the instrument. "What would you think of me," she asked, "if I became mistress at once?" She was told that that would be impossible;

there was no royal road to music. "Oh, there is no royal road to music, eh?" repeated the Princess. "No royal road? And I am not mistress of my piano-forte? But I will be, I assure you; and the royal road is this"—whereupon she closed the piano, locked it, and took out the key. "There!" she continued, "that's being mistress of the piano. And the royal road to learning is never to take a lesson till you're in the humour to do it." This, however, was spoken



QUEEN CAROLINE'S DRAWING-ROOM, KENSINGTON PALACE.

more out of a sense of fun than from any spirit of opposition; for, immediately afterwards, her Royal Highness resumed the interrupted lesson.

The readiness to admit a fault was amusingly shown by a little incident which occurred during a visit to the seat of Earl Fitzwilliam. The royal party were walking in the grounds, when the Princess ran on in advance. One of the under-gardeners pointed out that, owing to recent heavy rains, a certain walk was very slippery, or, as he expressed it, using a local term, "very slape." "Slape! slape!" exclaimed the Princess, in the style of quick reiteration which characterised the utterance of her grandfather, George III.; "and pray what is 'slape'?" The requisite explanation was given; but the little lady proceeded down the path, despite all warning, and speedily fell to the ground. Seeing what

had happened, Earl Fitzwilliam called out, "Now your Royal Highness has an explanation of the term 'slape,' both theoretically and practically." "Yes, my lord," she replied, "I think I have. I shall never forget the word 'slape.'" Another time, she persisted in playing with a dog against which she had been cautioned. The animal made a snap at her hand; and when her cautioner expressed his fears that she had been bitten, she replied, "Oh, thank you! thank you! You're right, and I am wrong; but he didn't bite me—he only warned me. I shall be careful in future." *

An additional grant of £6,000 a year was made to the Duchess of Kent in the



QUEEN ADELAIDE.

early summer of 1825, in order that the Princess Victoria, then six years of age, might be enabled to live more in accordance with her rank and prospects. After this period, the King (George IV.) behaved with greater kindness to his sister-in-law and niece. The latter, however, was not seen much at court during the remainder of that monarch's reign; indeed, her time was mainly occupied by the work of education. It was in 1830—shortly after the death of George IV.—that the Duchess of Northumberland was appointed, at the suggestion of the new King, to the office of governess to the Princess; and under her judicious care considerable progress was soon made. The accession of William IV. to the throne, on the 26th of June, 1830, placed the Princess Victoria in direct succession to the British Crown, as the Duke of York had died on the 5th of January, 1827. It was therefore thought advisable to make provision for the various contingencies

* McGilchrist's Life of Queen Victoria. 1868.

of the future ; and accordingly, towards the close of the year, a Regency Bill was introduced into Parliament, which provided that Queen Adelaide, in the event of her giving birth to a posthumous child, should be the guardian of such child during its minority, and also Regent of the kingdom. If that event did not occur, the Duchess of Kent was to be Regent during the minority of her daughter, the Princess Victoria, who was not to marry, while a minor, without the consent of the King, or, if he died, without the consent of both Houses of Parliament.

During these early years, Prince Leopold, brother of the Duchess of Kent, had acted the part of a father to the young Princess ; but he was now removed to a different scene and other duties. A revolution broke out at Brussels on the 25th of August, 1830, with the ultimate result that Belgium was separated from the Kingdom of the Netherlands, of which, since 1814, it had formed a part. On the 12th of July, 1831, Leopold was elected King of the new nationality, and a week later entered the capital. He had shortly before been designated by the Great Powers to the sovereignty of Greece, which had just achieved its independence of Turkey ; but he declined that perilous and doubtful honour. As the liberal and enlightened ruler of the Belgians, however, he acquired great and deserved distinction until his death on the 10th of December, 1865. The assumption of regal powers on the Continent removed Leopold from constant association with his niece ; but the nearness of Brussels enabled him to make frequent visits to England, and in after years the Queen often consulted him on difficult matters of State policy. His decease was in many respects a serious affliction to the sovereign of this realm.

Under the general direction of the Duchess of Northumberland, the instruction of the Princess was conducted by various gentlemen of high repute in their several attainments. She made considerable progress in Latin ; from Mr. Amos she received the elements of Constitutional Government as it exists in England ; and Westall, the painter, taught her the lighter graces of drawing. Music was now studied with assiduity, and the future Queen revealed at an early age that passion for a noble art which has distinguished her to the present day. Shortly after the accession of William IV., the health of the Princess underwent some decline, due in part to the distracting gaieties to which she had been introduced since the change of reign. This failure of health appears to have been the reason why her Royal Highness and the Duchess of Kent were absent from the coronation of King William, on the 8th of September, 1831, though the circumstance gave occasion at the time to many sinister remarks, as if the favour of the new monarch had been suddenly withdrawn from his niece. Such, however, was not the case. The Princess was treated with the consideration befitting her rank ; and, on the 24th of May, 1831, when she completed her twelfth year, Queen Adelaide gave a juvenile ball in her honour, the magnificence of which made a deep impression on the mind of the principal guest. It is evident, therefore, that the King and Queen retained their old affection for the Princess ; but the Duchess of Northumberland saw that so much excitement was having a prejudicial effect on

the health of her pupil, and she accordingly advised absence from court, and from the fatigue and turmoil of a coronation ceremony. Only a month before, the King had recommended to Parliament an increased allowance for the Princess; in consequence of which, an additional income of £10,000 a year, for her Royal Highness's maintenance and education, was granted by the national representatives. The Princess, however, was still much sequestered; and it may be that the Court of William IV., though better than that of his brother, was not well suited to a young girl whose mother considered her purity more than anything else.

It was about this period that Southey, the poet, historian, and critic, being one morning at Kensington Palace, was admitted to an interview with the Princess, who expressed to him the great pleasure she had derived both from his poetry and his prose, especially from the "Life of Nelson," which she declared she had read half a dozen times over. At the time of the coronation, the Duchess of Kent and her daughter were staying in the Isle of Wight, from which they afterwards proceeded to Worthing and Malvern. The Princess was a great admirer of ecclesiastical architecture and music, and she frequently visited such cathedral cities as Worcester, Hereford, and Chester. She was also entertained by the principal members of the nobility at their country seats, and thus acquired a knowledge of the semi-feudal state which still distinguishes the lives of our aristocracy. A very extensive home-tour was made in 1832, when, amongst other interesting events, the royal party visited the cotton-mills of the Messrs. Strutt at Belper, in Derbyshire. By means of a model, Mr. James Strutt explained to the Princess the various processes of cotton-spinning, and a great impression was produced by this exposition of a most important manufacture. It was a very felicitous thought to take her Royal Highness to one of those great seats of industry to which England owes so much, and to show her how varied, complicated, and far-reaching were the interests over which, in the maturity of time, she was to bear sway. From this visit, in all probability, may be dated the Queen's intelligent appreciation of the commercial and manufacturing greatness of her Empire, which brings unparalleled wealth into the land, circulates wages amongst innumerable labourers, and furnishes a counterpoise to the preponderance of hereditary power. In 1856, the Queen conferred the dignity of a peerage, with the title of Baron Belper, on the son of Mr. James Strutt, who had conducted her over the factory four-and-twenty years earlier.

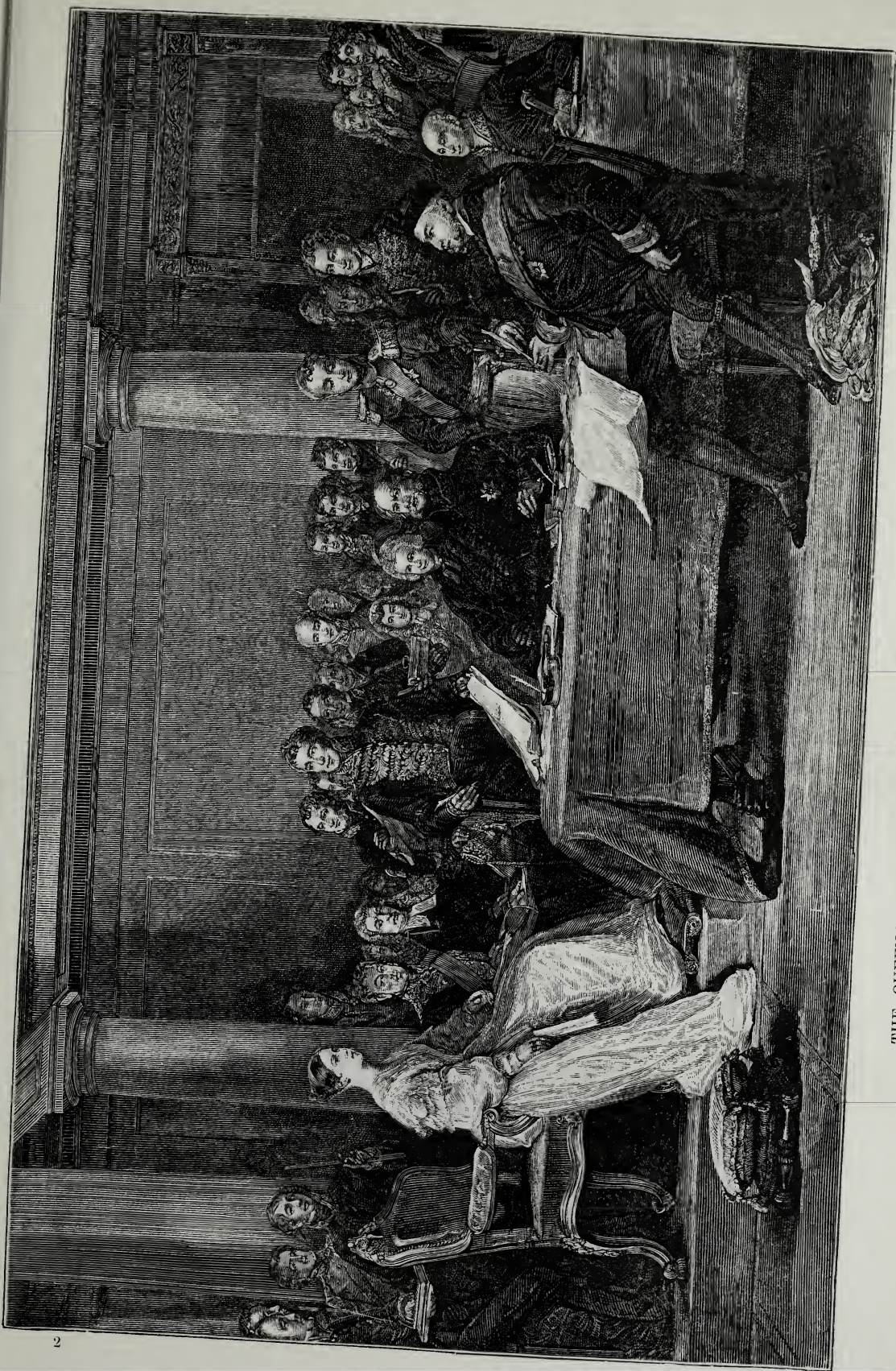
Before the conclusion of the royal tour, the Princess and her mother visited Oxford, where they were presented with an address in the Sheldonian Theatre by the Vice-Chancellor. In her reply, the Duchess of Kent said:—"We close a most interesting journey by a visit to this University, that the Princess may see, as far as her years will allow, all that is interesting in it. The history of our country has taught her to know its importance by the many distinguished persons who, by their character and talents, have been raised to eminence by the education they have received in it. Your loyalty to the King, and recollection

of the favour you have enjoyed under the paternal sway of his house, could not fail, I was sure, to lead you to receive his niece with all the disposition you evince to make this visit agreeable and instructive to her. It is my object to ensure, by all means in my power, her being so educated as to meet the just expectation of all classes in this great and free country."



THE DUKE OF KENT.

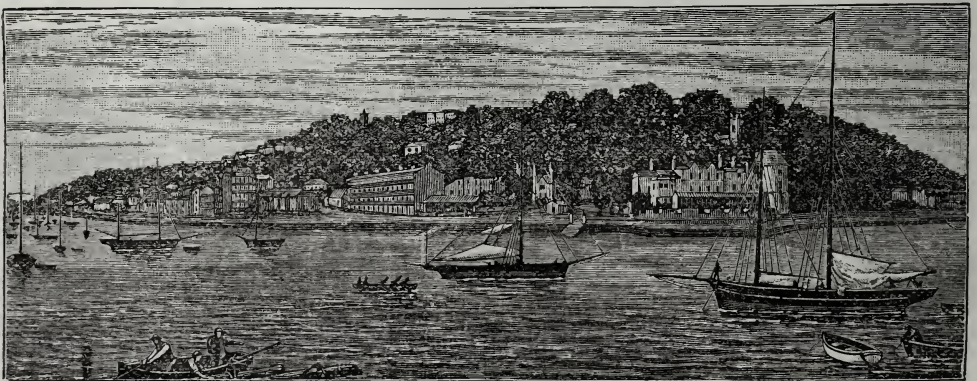
Their Royal Highnesses returned to Kensington on the 9th of November, 1832, and in the following year confined themselves to the south coast of England. The most memorable circumstance of this trip was one of those ceremonials in which the Queen has since so often taken part. While the Duchess of Kent and her daughter were residing at East Cowes, in the Isle of Wight, they attended the opening of the new landing-pier at Southampton, then beginning to acquire importance as a great southern port. In Southampton



THE QUEEN'S FIRST COUNCIL. (After the Painting by Sir David Wilkie). [See p. 19.]

Water, the Royal yacht, which had been towed from Cowes by a steamer, was met by a deputation from the corporation of the town, the members of which were stationed on board an eight-oared barge, with one of the town-sergeants bearing a silver oar. To the address of this deputation, the Duchess of Kent replied that she wished her daughter to become attached, at an early age, to works of utility—an attachment which, in later life, her Majesty has exhibited on many interesting occasions. The distinguished visitors were then rowed ashore, and entertained at luncheon; after which, the Duchess of Kent signified her pleasure that the new pier should be called the Royal Pier.

In July, 1834, the Princess Victoria was confirmed by the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Howley) in the Chapel Royal, St. James's. The remainder of the year was distinguished by no very remarkable events; but a little incident occurring at Tunbridge Wells gives a pleasing idea of the young Princess's benevolence. The husband of an actress employed at the town theatre died under circumstances of poverty, leaving his wife on the eve of her confinement. Distressed at what she heard, the Princess obtained £10 from her mother, added an equal sum from her own resources, and personally carried the amount to the sufferer. After the accession of her Majesty to the throne, she conferred on the actress an annuity of £40 for the remainder of her life. The years 1835 and 1836 passed very quietly; but 1837 was destined to be a date of great importance. On the 24th of May, the Princess completed her eighteenth year, and was declared legally of age, according to the provisions of the Act of Parliament to which reference has before been made. The day was kept as a general holiday: Kensington was especially festive, and a serenade to the Princess was performed under the Palace windows at seven o'clock in the evening. Among the numerous birthday presents was a magnificent pianoforte from the King. Within a month from that time, William IV. had breathed his last.



COWES HARBOUR.

CHAPTER II.

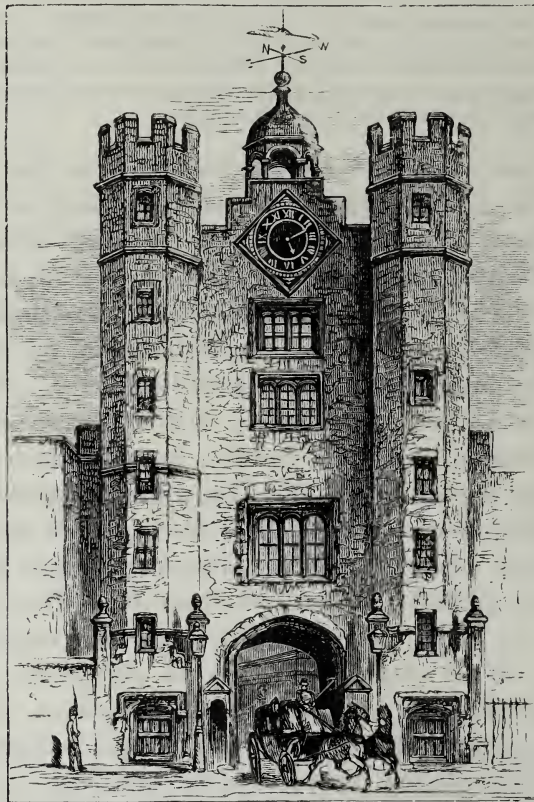
EARLY EVENTS OF THE NEW REIGN.

First Council of the Queen—Her Address to the Assembled Dignitaries—Admirable Demeanour of the young Sovereign—Proclamation of Queen Victoria—Condition of the Empire at the Time of her Accession—Character of Lord Melbourne, the Prime Minister—His Training of the Queen in Constitutional Principles—Question of the Royal Prerogative and the choosing of the Ministry—Removal of the Queen to Buckingham Palace—First Levee—Her Majesty's Speech on the Dissolution of Parliament—Amelioration of the Criminal Laws—Results of the General Election—Meeting of the New Legislature—The Civil List fixed—Relations of the Queen towards the Duchess of Kent—Daily Life of her Majesty—Royal Visit to the City—Insurrection in the Two Canadas—Measures of the Government, and Suppression of the Revolt—The Melbourne Administration and Lord Durham—Reform of the Canadian Constitution.

WE now resume our narrative of what happened on the first day of the new reign—the 20th of June, 1837. At eleven o'clock in the forenoon—the appointed hour—Queen Victoria, attended by the chief officers of the household, entered the Council Chamber, and seated herself on a throne which had been placed there. The Lord Chancellor (Cottenham) then administered the customary oath taken by the sovereigns of England on their accession, in which they promise to govern according to the laws. The Princes, Peers, Privy Councillors, and Cabinet Ministers, next took the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, kneeling before the throne; and the first name on the list was that of Ernest, King of Hanover, known to Englishmen as the Duke of Cumberland. The Queen caused these distinguished persons to be sworn in as members of the Council, and the Cabinet Ministers, having surrendered their seals of office, immediately received them back from her Majesty, and kissed her hand on their reappointment. Having ordered the necessary alterations in the official stamps and form of prayer, the Council drew up and signed the Proclamation of her Majesty's accession, which was publicly read on the following day. But one of the principal incidents of that memorable Council was the reading by the Queen (previously to the surrender of the seals by the Ministers, and their reappointment) of an address which ran as follows:—

“The severe and afflicting loss which the nation has sustained by the death of his Majesty, my beloved uncle, has devolved upon me the duty of administering the government of this Empire. This awful responsibility is imposed upon me so suddenly, and at so early a period, that I should feel myself utterly oppressed by the burden, were I not sustained by the hope that Divine Providence, which has called me to this work, will give me strength for the performance of it, and that I shall find, in the purity of my intentions, and in my zeal for the public welfare, that support and those resources which usually belong to a more mature age and longer experience. I place my firm reliance upon the wisdom of Parliament, and upon the loyalty and

affection of my people. I esteem it also a peculiar advantage that I succeeded to a sovereign whose constant regard for the rights and liberties of his subjects, and whose desire to promote the amelioration of the laws and institutions of the country, have rendered his name the object of general attachment and veneration. Educated in England, under the tender and affectionate care of a most affectionate mother, I have learned from my infancy to respect and love the constitution of my native country. It will be my

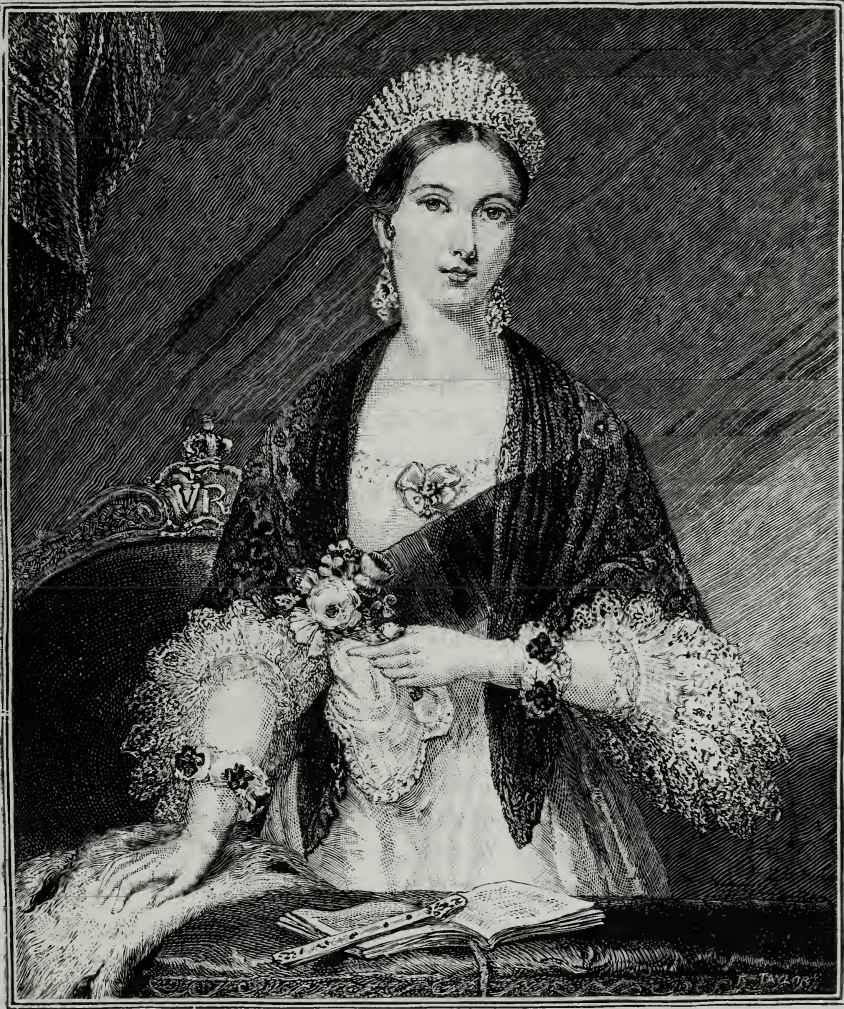


GATEWAY OF ST. JAMES'S PALACE

unceasing study to maintain the reformed religion as by law established, securing at the same time, to all, the full enjoyment of religious liberty; and I shall steadily protect the rights, and promote to the utmost of my power the happiness and welfare, of all classes of my subjects."

The demeanour of the Queen on this difficult and agitating occasion is described as composed and dignified. She received the homage of the nobility without any undue excitement, and her delivery of the address was an admirable specimen of the clear and impressive reading to which her Majesty has since accustomed the public. Occasionally she glanced towards Lord Melbourne for guidance; but this occurred very seldom, and for the most part her self-

possession was extraordinary. The quietude of manner was now and then broken by touches of natural feeling which moved the hearts of all present. Her Majesty was particularly considerate to the Royal Dukes, her uncles; and when the Duke of Sussex (who was infirm) presented himself to take the



QUEEN VICTORIA AT THE TIME OF HER ACCESSION.

oath of allegiance, and was about to kneel, she anticipated his action, kissed his cheek, and said, with great tenderness of tone and gesture, "Do not kneel, my uncle, for I am still Victoria, your niece."

On the whole, that day was the most memorable in the Queen's life, and its effects were seen next morning in an aspect of pallor and fatigue. An inexperienced girl, only just eighteen, had been invested with a power which carried with it the gravest responsibilities towards innumerable millions; and she

had for the first time to discharge the duties of the State—duties of which she could have had no practical knowledge until then—under the affliction of a personal loss, for there can be no doubt that she was attached to her uncle, the late King. The lonely height of regal splendour was never more sharply or intensely felt than by that young Princess in the first hours of her grandeur and her burden. It is true that the death of King William was not unexpected, and that his niece had for some years been familiarised with the fact that, in the ordinary course of nature, she would one day succeed to the crown. But death is always surprising when it comes, and the new monarch had seen little of the ceremonial life of courts before her elevation to the throne. Owing to the temporary failure of health to which we have alluded, the Princess had not been made fully aware of her destiny until after she had entered her twelfth year. She had probably thought but little of the future in the intervening time; and at eighteen she was called upon to administer the affairs of a vast Empire, full of varied races, of complex interests, and of unsettled problems.

The new sovereign was proclaimed under the title of “Alexandrina Victoria”; but the first name has not been officially used since that day. The appearance of the Queen at one of the windows of St. James’s Palace, on the morning of June 21st, was greeted with immense enthusiasm by a vast crowd of people who had assembled to hear the Proclamation read, but who did not anticipate that the sovereign would present herself. At ten o’clock, the guns in the Park fired a salute, and immediately afterwards her Majesty stood conspicuously before her subjects. Dressed very simply in deep mourning, her fair hair and clear complexion came out the more effectively for their black surroundings. With visible emotion, and with her face bathed in tears, she listened to the reading of the Proclamation, supported by Lord Melbourne on the one side, and by Lord Lansdowne on the other, both dressed in court costume; while close at hand was the Duchess of Kent. The court-yard of the Palace was filled with a brilliant assemblage of high functionaries, consisting of Garter King-at-Arms, heralds and pursuivants, officers-of-arms on horseback, sergeants-at-arms, the sergeant-trumpeter, the Knights-Marshal and their men, the Duke of Norfolk as Earl-Marshal of England, and others—all clad in the picturesque dresses and wearing the insignia of their offices. At the conclusion of the Proclamation the Queen threw herself into the arms of her mother, and gave free vent to her feelings, while the band played the National Anthem, the Park and Tower guns discharged their salvos, and the spectators burst into repeated acclamations.

In some respects, the accession of Queen Victoria took place at a fortunate time. England was at peace with all foreign Powers; her colonies were undisturbed, with the exception of Canada, where some long-seated discontents were on the eve of breaking out into a rebellion which for a while proved formidable; and, about three years before, slavery had ceased in all British possessions. At home, several of the more difficult questions of politics and statecraft had been settled, either permanently or for a time, in the two preceding reigns; so that large

sections of the people, formerly disloyal, or at least unfriendly to the existing order, were well disposed towards a form of government which no longer appeared in the light of an oppression. The repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, in 1828, had conciliated the Dissenters; the removal of Roman Catholic disabilities, in 1829, had abolished one of the grievances of Ireland. By the Reform Bill of 1832—the temporary defeat of which had very nearly plunged the country into revolution—the middle classes had obtained a considerable accession of political power. The sanguinary rigour of the criminal laws had been partially mitigated; and, in September, 1835, an Act was passed for reforming the government of municipal corporations. The great Constitutional question, touching on the relation of the sovereign towards the Cabinet, had been virtually settled, during the same year, in harmony with those Parliamentary claims which were at any rate in accordance with the current of popular feeling. France—the great hotbed of revolution—was comparatively tranquil; and nothing in the general state of the world betokened the advent of any serious troubles.

Lord Melbourne, who held the office of Prime Minister at the time of the Queen's accession, was an easy-tempered man of the world, well versed in political affairs, but possessed of little power as a speaker, and distinguished rather for tact than high statesmanship. He had entered public life in 1805 as an adherent of Charles James Fox, and therefore as a Whig of the most pronounced type; it was as leader of the Whigs that he now held power; but in the latter part of the reign of George IV. he had taken office under the Conservative Administrations of Mr. Canning, Lord Goderich, and the Duke of Wellington. In truth, he cared more for government than for legislation, and was therefore well disposed to join any set of politicians who seemed capable of conducting the affairs of the country with firmness and sense. Still, his most natural and permanent inclinations were towards a moderate Whiggism, very different, however, from the quasi-Radicalism of Fox, which he had adopted in the days of his youth. In 1830 he accepted the seals of the Home Office in the Government of Earl Grey; and this brought him back to the old connection. On the retirement of Lord Grey, in July, 1834, he succeeded to the Premiership; but in the following November the King dismissed the Ministry without any reference to the wishes of Parliament, and placed the Government in the hands of Sir Robert Peel. This was the occasion of that Constitutional struggle which, in consequence of the House of Commons gaining the day, has fixed the later practice in accordance with what are usually regarded as popular principles. Sir Robert Peel encountered so much opposition that, in April, 1835, he was compelled to resign, and Lord Melbourne for the second time became First Lord of the Treasury.

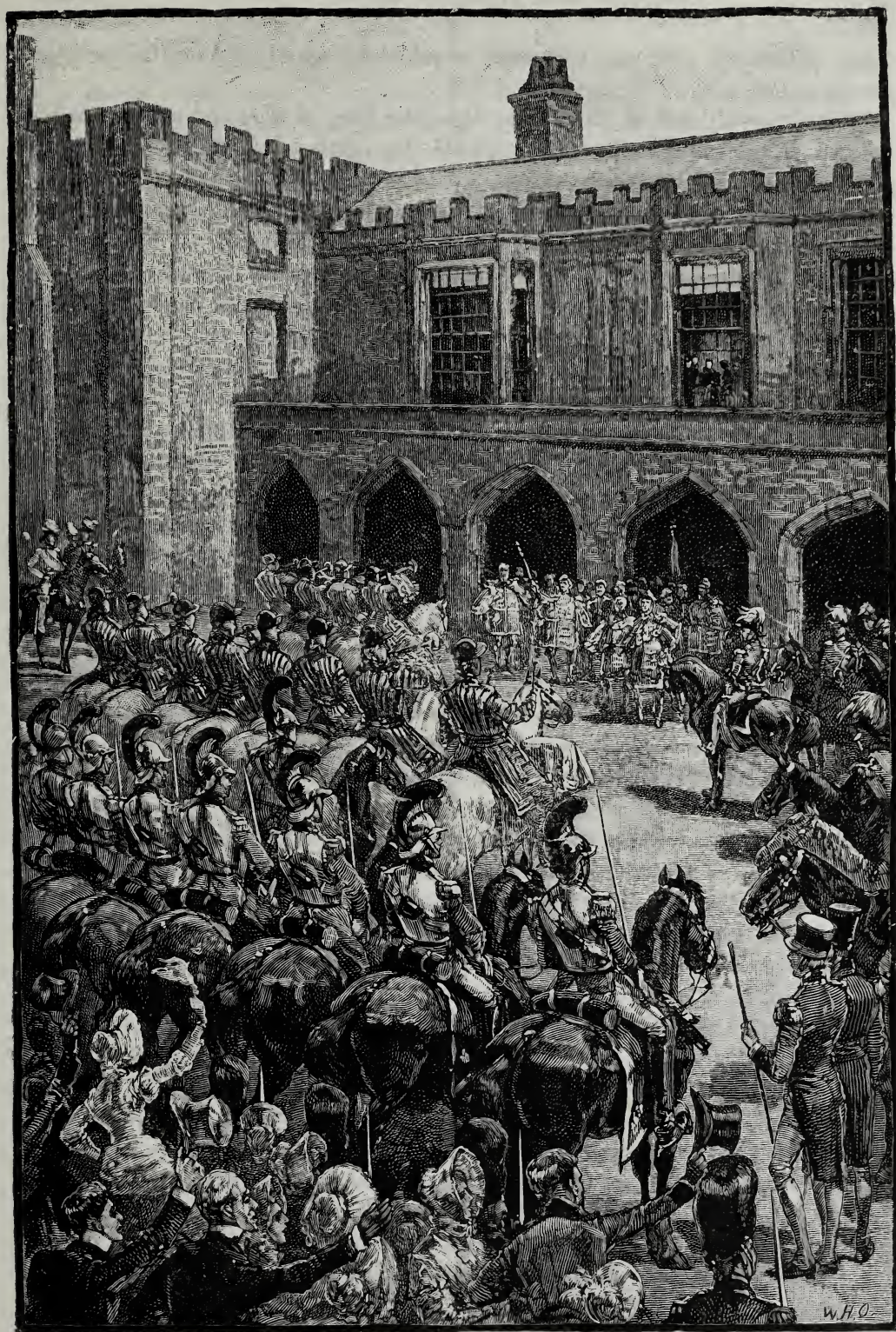
It was from this versatile, well-informed, but not very profound statesman that her Majesty received her first practical instructions in the theory and working of the British Constitution. That Lord Melbourne discharged his office with ability, devotion, and conscientiousness, is generally admitted; but it may

be questioned whether he did not, however unintentionally, give something of a party bias to her Majesty's conceptions of policy, and whether his teachings did not too much depress the regal power in England. It is in truth only within the present reign that it has come to be a fixed principle in English affairs that the Ministers for the time being are to be chosen from the majority of the



LORD MELBOURNE.

House of Commons, without the least regard to the sovereign's desires. Melbourne himself, as we have seen, suffered from William's assertion of his independence in the matter of choosing his Ministers; and it was perhaps not unnatural that he should wish to establish a contrary practice, by instilling into the mind of his illustrious pupil the conviction that absolute submission to the Parliamentary majority (or rather to the majority in the Lower House) was the only Constitutional course. But in fact that very course was an innovation; and to Lord Melbourne, more than to any other man, is the innovation attributable. There had undoubtedly been a movement in this direction since the latter end of the seventeenth century; but it had been occasional rather



PROCLAMATION OF THE QUEEN AT ST. JAMES'S PALACE. (See p. 22.)

than continuous, and was frequently checked by reactions towards the other practice.

From an early date in the Middle Ages, the King of England was assisted in the task of governing by the Privy Council, the members of which body did not, at the utmost, much exceed twelve. All were appointed by the sovereign, and each was removable at his pleasure. In process of time, the number of councillors became so great that their capacity for the despatch of business was seriously impaired; and in 1679 Charles II. limited the assembly to thirty members, of whom fifteen were to be the principal officers of State. Those functionaries had already assumed, under the name of the "Cabinet," a species of separate existence, though only as a part of the larger body to which they belonged. It was not until shortly after the Restoration that this interior council acquired much importance; and by many it was regarded as unconstitutional and dangerous. Even at the present day, the Cabinet, in the striking language of Macaulay, "still continues to be altogether unknown to the law: the names of the noblemen and gentlemen who compose it are never officially announced to the public; no record is kept of its meetings and resolutions, nor has its existence ever been recognised by any Act of Parliament."* Nevertheless, the Cabinet, having gained a place in the machinery of the State, gradually drew to itself greater powers; and when, in 1693, the Earl of Sunderland persuaded William III. to choose his Ministers from among the members of the predominant party in the House of Commons, it is obvious that both the Legislature and the Government obtained increased importance. Yet the King still allowed himself considerable latitude, and had certainly no intention of giving up all power in the matter.

The eighteenth century was mainly divided between the laxity of the first two Georges—who, as foreigners largely concerned in Continental affairs, were glad to leave much to their Ministers, especially to so powerful a man as Sir Robert Walpole, though their powers of initiative were not entirely abandoned—and the high-prerogative ideas of the third George, who conceived that the kingly office had been unduly lowered since the Revolution of 1688, and who resented the supremacy of a few Whig families. Whatever may be thought of his policy or his motives, it cannot be denied that George III. was within his right in determining to have an actual voice in the appointment of his Ministers. A legal authority says:—"The Cabinet Council, as it is called, consists of those Ministers of State who are more immediately honoured with his Majesty's confidence, and who are summoned to consult upon the important and arduous discharge of the executive authority. Their number and selection depend only upon the King's pleasure; and each member of that Council receives a summons or message for every attendance." Such is the statement of Mr. Edward Christian, Chief Justice of the Isle of Ely, and Downing Professor of the Laws of England in the University of Cambridge, in a note to the fourteenth edition of Blackstone's

* History of England, Vol. I., chap. 2.

Commentaries, published in 1803; and similar expositions appear in much more recent law-books. Originally, the Cabinet Council was a committee of the Privy Council: it is now, in effect, very little else than a committee of the House of Commons; and it was Lord Melbourne's instructions to the young Queen which gave it finally, and perhaps irrevocably, that character.

Queen Victoria and her mother left Kensington on the 13th of July, and proceeded to Buckingham Palace, a residence which George IV. had favoured, and which William IV. detested and forsook. A levee was held shortly after her Majesty's arrival; on which occasion the Queen is said to have presented a striking appearance, her head glittering with diamonds, and her breast covered with the insignia of the Garter and other orders. More important business, however, was approaching, and on the 17th of the month the Queen went in State to the House of Lords to dissolve Parliament. Addressing both Houses, her Majesty said:—"I have been anxious to seize the first opportunity of meeting you, in order that I might repeat in person my cordial thanks for your condolence upon the death of his late Majesty, and for the expression of attachment and affection with which you congratulated me upon my accession to the throne. I am very desirous of renewing the assurances of my determination to maintain the Protestant religion as established by law; to secure to all the free exercise of the rights of conscience; to protect the liberties, and to promote the welfare, of all classes of the community. I rejoice that, in ascending the throne, I find the country in amity with all foreign Powers; and, while I faithfully perform the engagements of the Crown, and carefully watch over the interests of my subjects, it will be the constant object of my solicitude to maintain the blessings of peace." After alluding to the chief events of the session, the Queen concluded by observing:—"I ascend the throne with a deep sense of the responsibility which is imposed upon me; but I am supported by the consciousness of my own right intentions, and by my dependence upon the protection of Almighty God. It will be my care to strengthen our institutions, civil and ecclesiastical, by discreet improvement, wherever improvement is required, and to do all in my power to compose and allay animosity and discord. Acting upon these principles, I shall on all occasions look with confidence to the wisdom of Parliament and the affection of my people, which form the true support of the dignity of the Crown, and ensure the stability of the Constitution."

In the course of this speech—which was delivered with great clearness and elocutionary power—the Queen expressed marked pleasure at a further mitigation of the criminal code, which she hailed as an auspicious commencement of her reign. The change was assuredly much needed, and the subject had engaged the attention of eminent statesmen and lawyers for several years. Jeremy Bentham had exposed the unreasonable and cruel severity of the punishments attached to comparatively trivial offences; and Sir Samuel Romilly, seconded by Sir James Mackintosh and Sir Fowell Buxton, had brought the state of the law before the notice of the Legislature. For a long while, the disinclination

of Parliament to deal with important reforms kept this crying abuse of justice in the background; but in 1833 a Royal Commission was issued, for the purpose of inquiring how far it might be expedient to reduce the written and unwritten law of the country into one digest, and to report on the best manner of doing it. In the following year, the Commissioners were further required to state their opinions on the subject of the employment of counsel by prisoners, and on capital punishment. At the present day, it seems almost incredible that until 1836 the accused in criminal trials were not professionally defended. But still worse was the merciless spirit with which the rights of property were hedged about. A case is reported in which a poor Cornish woman, who, urged by want caused by the impressment of her husband as a seaman, had stolen a piece of cloth from a tradesman's door, was hanged for the fact. Indeed, in the earlier years of the present century, the death-penalty was so frequent, and attached to so many offences, that numerous criminals were executed regularly every Monday morning outside Newgate. The extreme rigour of the law, however, was softened by various Acts of Parliament, passed from 1824 to 1829, with which the name of Sir Robert Peel is honourably associated. But much still remained to be done; and the Acts to which the Queen alluded, and which were introduced into the House of Commons by Lord John Russell, confined the punishment of death to high treason, and, with some exceptions, to offences consisting of, or aggravated by, violence to the person, or tending directly to endanger life. By the Criminal Law Consolidation Acts of 1861, death is now confined to treason and wilful murder; so that the reign of Queen Victoria has been distinguished, amongst other things, by a great and beneficent reform in the criminal laws of England.

The General Election followed quickly on the dissolution of Parliament, and the Whigs, who had been losing popularity for some time past, proceeded to the country with the questionable credit of being supported by Royal favour. Personally, the Queen liked Lord Melbourne, and readily adopted the political opinions he advanced. The Ministerialists made the most of the fact, and it was even said that they went about "placarded with her Majesty's name." But it is not improbable that this very circumstance told against them in many quarters, by inducing waverers to believe that the holders of office were endeavouring to influence the electorate after a manner entirely foreign to constitutional usage. At any rate, the Government lost seriously in the counties; yet, owing to their gains among the borough constituencies, and the large amount of support obtained in Scotland and Ireland, they returned to Westminster with a small majority, though with an appreciable loss of political repute. Parliament reassembled on the 20th of November, and on the 12th of December the Queen sent a message to the House of Commons asking for a suitable provision for the Duchess of Kent. This was made; the Civil List was settled, though not without some opposition from the economists; and the necessary preliminaries of a new reign were complete. The income of the Queen's mother was fixed at



BANQUET TO THE QUEEN IN THE GUILDHALL (NOVEMBER 9, 1837). [See p. 31.]

£30,000, as against £22,000 previously; while the Civil List of her Majesty was settled at £385,000 a year, including £60,000 for the Privy Purse.

The Queen at once threw herself with business-like precision into the duties of her high office. She rose at eight, signed despatches until the breakfast hour, and then sent one of the servants to "invite" the Duchess of Kent to the Royal table. Such was the rather cold formality observed by the young monarch; and in other respects the etiquette of a Court seems to have been followed with rigid exactness. The Duchess never approached the Queen unless specially summoned, and always refrained from conversing on affairs of State. These restraints were considered necessary, in order to prevent any suspicion of undue influence by the mother over the daughter; but they were very distressing to the former. The late Mr. Charles C. F. Greville, for many years Clerk of the Council, was told by the Princess de Lieven that the Duchess of Kent was "overwhelmed with vexation and disappointment." The same authority adds that the Queen behaved with kindness and attention to her parent, but she had rendered herself quite independent of the Duchess, who painfully felt her own insignificance. For eighteen years, she complained to Princess de Lieven, she had made her child the sole object of all her thoughts and hopes; and now she was taken from her. Speaking from his own observations, Mr. Greville remarks:—"In the midst of all her propriety of mind and conduct, the young Queen begins to exhibit slight signs of a peremptory disposition, and it is impossible not to suspect that, as she gains confidence, and as her character begins to develop, she will evince a strong will of her own."* With respect to the Queen and the Duchess, it should be recollected that one in the exalted position of the former is necessarily bound by other than domestic rules.

At twelve o'clock, the sovereign conferred with her Ministers, and the serious business of the day at once began. When a document was handed to her Majesty, she read it without comment until the end was reached, the Ministers in the meanwhile observing a profound silence. The interval between the termination of the Council and the dinner-hour was devoted to riding or walking, and the public had many opportunities of observing the admirable style in which the Queen sat her horse. At dinner, the first Lord-in-waiting took the head of the table, opposite to whom was the chief Equerry-in-waiting. The Queen sat half-way down on the right hand, and the guests were of course placed according to their respective ranks. At an early hour, her Majesty left the table for the drawing-room, where the time was passed in music and conversation. The sovereign herself was a proficient at the pianoforte, and often showed her abilities in this respect; and when the gentlemen returned from the dining-room (which was in about a quarter of an hour), a little singing would give variety to the evening. Mr. Greville speaks of these banquets as dull and formal. They were doubtless unavoidably so; for the ceremony of

* The Greville Memoirs: Second Part (1885), relating to the Reign of Queen Victoria from 1837 to 1852.

a Court is not favourable to the charm and vividness of the best social intercourse.

On the 9th of November—eleven days before the meeting of Parliament—the Queen went in State to the City, and was present at the inaugural banquet of the new Lord Mayor, Alderman Cowan. The streets through which her Majesty passed were densely thronged by people of all orders, who kept up an almost continual volley of cheers as the Royal carriages, with their escort, proceeded eastward. The houses were hung with richly-coloured cloths, green boughs, and such flowers as could be furnished by the mid-autumn season. Busts of Victoria were reared upon extemporary pedestals; flags and heraldic devices stretched across the streets; and London displayed as much festive adornment as was possible in those days. At Temple Bar, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen were seen mounted on artillery-horses from Woolwich, each with a soldier at its head, to restrain any erratic movement that might have troubled the composure of the City dignitaries. On the arrival of the Queen, the Lord Mayor dismounted, and, taking the City sword in his hand, delivered the keys to her Majesty, who at once returned them. Then the Lord Mayor resumed his horse, and, bearing the sword aloft, rode before the Queen into the heart of the City, the Aldermen following in the rear of the Royal carriage. In the open space before St. Paul's Cathedral, hustings had been erected, on which were stationed the Liverymen of the City Companies, and the Christ Hospital (or Blue-coat) boys. One of the latter presented an address to the Queen, in accordance with ancient custom, and the whole of the boys then sang the National Anthem. The Guildhall was magnificently adorned for the occasion; and here an address was read by the Recorder. A sumptuous banquet followed, and at night the metropolis was very generally illuminated. On this occasion, the Queen was accompanied by the Duchesses of Kent, Gloucester, and Cambridge, and by the Dukes of Cambridge and Sussex, together with Prince George of Cambridge. The Ambassadors, Cabinet Ministers, and nobility, followed in a train of two hundred carriages, which are said to have extended for a mile and a half. The title of Baronet was conferred on the Lord Mayor, and the two Sheriffs were knighted. It was long since the City had had so brilliant a day, and the memory of it survived for many years.

The first great historical event in the reign of Queen Victoria was the insurrection in Canada. This proved to be of very serious import, and undoubtedly showed the existence of much disaffection on the part of the French-speaking colonists. It is probable that the latter had never outgrown the mortification of being snatched from their old association with the mother-country, and subjected to a Protestant kingdom. For several years after the Treaty of 1763, which made over Canada to Great Britain as a consequence of the brilliant victories gained by Wolfe and Amherst, the colony was despotically ruled; but in 1791 a more representative form of government was established, by which the whole possession was divided into an Upper and a Lower Province. Each of the

provinces was furnished with a constitution, comprising a Governor, an Executive Council nominated by the Crown, a Legislative Council appointed for life in the same way, and a Representative Assembly elected for four years. This constitution (which had been sanctioned by an Act of the British Parliament) worked very badly, and in 1837 the Assemblies of both provinces were at issue with their Governors, and with the Councils appointed by the monarch. But by far the most serious state of affairs was that which prevailed in Lower (or Easterr.) Canada, where the population was mainly of French origin, and where, consequently, the antagonism of race and of religion was chiefly to be expected. Towards the latter end of the reign of William IV., Commissioners were nominated to inquire into the alleged grievances, and the report of these gentlemen was presented to Parliament early in the session of 1837. On the 6th of March, Lord John Russell (then Home Secretary) brought the subject before the attention of the House of Commons, and, after many prolonged debates, a series of resolutions was passed, affirming the necessity of certain reforms in the political state of Canada. These reforms, however, did not go nearly far enough to satisfy the requirements of the disaffected, and by the close of 1837 the Canadians were in full revolt.

When the Queen opened her first Parliament, on the 20th of November, the state of Lower Canada was recommended, in the Royal Speech, to the "serious consideration" of the Legislature. Before any measures could be taken, intelligence of the outbreak reached England, and, on the 22nd of December, Lord John Russell informed the House of Commons that the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada had been adjourned, on its refusal to entertain the supplies, or to proceed to business, in consequence of what were deemed the insufficient proposals of the Imperial Government. The colonists had undoubtedly some grievances of old standing, and their constitution required amendment in a popular sense. But a position had been assumed which the advisers of the Crown could not possibly tolerate, and the malcontents were now in arms against the just and legal authority of the sovereign. As early as March, Lord John Russell had said that, since the 31st of October, 1832, no provision had been made by the legislators of Lower Canada for defraying the charges of the administration of justice, or for the support of civil government in the province. The arrears amounted to a very large sum, which the House of Assembly refused to vote, while at the same time demanding an elected Legislative Council, and entire control over all branches of the Government.

The insurgents of Canada had numerous sympathisers in the United States, where, under cover of a good deal of extravagant talk about liberty, many people began to hope that existing complications would effect the long-desired annexation of the two provinces to the great Federal Republic. Those who were the most earnest in their views soon passed from sympathy into action. In the latter days of 1837, a party of Americans seized on Navy Island, a small piece of territory, situated in the river Niagara a little above the Falls, and

belonging to Canada. Numbering as many as seven hundred, and having with them twenty pieces of cannon, these unauthorised volunteers seemed likely to prove formidable; but their means of offence were soon diminished by an energetic, though somewhat irregular, proceeding on the part of the Canadian authorities, acting, as was afterwards well known, under the orders of Sir Francis Head, the



PRESIDENT VAN BUREN.

Governor of Upper Canada. A small steamboat owned by the American invaders, with which they kept up communications with their own side of the river, and which was laden with arms and ammunition for the insurgents, was cut adrift from her moorings on the night of December 29th, set on fire, and left to sweep over the cataract. The affair led to a great deal of diplomatic correspondence between the American and British Governments; but the preceding violation of Canadian soil by a body of adventurers precluded the Cabinet of Washington from making any serious demands on that of London. Ultimately, in the course of 1838, the President (Mr. Van Buren) issued a proclamation calling on all persons engaged in schemes for invading Canada to desist from the same, on pain

of such punishments as the law attached to the offence. This put an end to the difficulty so far as the two countries were concerned; but the insurrection was not yet entirely suppressed.

Although the worst disaffection was in Lower Canada, both provinces were disturbed by movements of a disloyal nature. Upper Canada was excited by the fiery appeals of a Scotsman named William Lyon Mackenzie; Lower Canada by the incitements of Louis Joseph Papineau, one of the disaffected French provincials. The two divisions of the colony, however, were jealous of each other, and this hampered what might otherwise have been a more dangerous rising. The Radical party in England supported the cause of the malcontents, and insisted on the necessity of at once redressing all grievances. The Government of Lord Melbourne maintained that the rebellion must be first suppressed; and undoubtedly that was the only course consistent with Imperial authority. In the autumn of 1837, a small party of English troops was beaten at St. Denis; but another detachment was successful against the rebels, and the garrisons of the various cities, though extremely small, held their own against the rising tide of insurrection. Aided by the Royalists, the Government force under Sir John Colborne inflicted some severe blows on the enemy; yet the movement continued throughout the greater part of 1838. On the 16th of January in that year, however, the Earl of Durham had been appointed Governor-General of the five British colonies of North America, and Lord High Commissioner for the adjustment of the affairs of Canada. The liberal policy thus inaugurated, and the victories obtained over the rebels by Sir John Colborne, Sir Francis Head, and others, brought the revolt to an end before the close of the year, and the colony soon afterwards entered on a future of prosperity.

The task of Lord Durham had, nevertheless, been surrounded by many difficulties, and, although he was sent by the British Government to carry out measures of leniency and concession, which his personal inclinations were well inclined to second, he was speedily called to account by the Imperial Cabinet for an ordinance touching the punishment of offenders, which, being regarded as in some respects illegal, was disallowed. Protesting that he had been abandoned by the Government, Lord Durham resigned on the 9th of October, and the principal conduct of affairs was left in the hands of Sir John Colborne. The policy of the High Commissioner had been swayed by truly benevolent and broadly liberal motives; but he had adopted—perhaps necessarily, considering the state of affairs with which he had to deal—a highly dictatorial manner, and the Opposition at home (especially in the Upper House, under the violent incentives of Lord Brougham) found several opportunities of effective attack. The Government, being weak and vacillating, said less in defence of their representative than they might have done; Lord Durham, in his passionate and imperious way, issued a farewell proclamation to the people of Canada, which, in effect, amounted to an appeal from the decisions of the Queen's advisers—an appeal, that is, to a community still in rebellion against the Crown; Ministers

replied by recalling their insubordinate servant; and the career of Lord Durham was at an end. Having left his post without permission—certainly a very improper proceeding—he was not honoured with the usual salute on landing, and, in revenge, caused his wife to withdraw from the position she held in the Queen's household.

The recall of Lord Durham had been anticipated by his resignation; but the disgraced official, assisted by his two secretaries, Charles Buller and Edward Gibbon Wakefield, drew up a report containing the germs of that system of unity and self-government under which Canada has since become a loyal, contented, and progressive colony. It was not long before the Cabinet of Lord Melbourne carried out the suggestions of the discredited, but still successful, dictator. In 1839, Lord Glenelg, who had been Colonial Secretary during the dissension with Lord Durham, gave place to Lord Normanby, and he shortly afterwards to Lord John Russell, who in 1840 passed a measure for reuniting Upper and Lower Canada, and establishing a system of colonial freedom. In the same year, Lord Durham died at the early age of forty-eight; but the principles of his colonial policy rose triumphant above his tomb.

CHAPTER III.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF A YOUNG SOVEREIGN.

Decline in the Popularity of the Queen—Its Causes—Her Majesty Accused of Encouraging the Papists—Alleged Design to Assassinate the Monarch—Disloyal Toryism—Honourable Conduct of the Queen—Fatal Riots at Canterbury, owing to the Pretensions of John Nicholls Thom—Preparations for the Coronation—The Ceremony at Westminster Abbey—Incidents of the Day—Mismanagement at Coronations—Development of Steam Navigation and the Railway System—Prorogation of Parliament in August, 1833—Difficult Position of the Government—Rise of Chartism—Appearance of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli in the Political Arena—Failure of Mr. Disraeli's First Speech—"Conservatives" and "Liberals"—Capture of Aden, in Southern Arabia—Wars with China, owing to the Smuggling of Opium into that Country by the Anglo-Indians—Troubles in Jamaica—Bill for Suspending the Constitution—Defeat and Resignation of the Melbourne Government—Ineffectual Attempt of Sir Robert Peel to Form a Cabinet—The Question of the Bed-chamber Women—Reinstatement of the Melbourne Administration.

NOTHING could exceed the popularity of the Queen at the beginning of her reign. Her youth, her innocence, the novelty of her duties and the difficulty of her position, all appealed with a commanding tenderness to every manly instinct and every womanly sympathy. But after a while a change occurred in the national sentiment, which was not altogether inexcusable on the part of the public, though it did some injustice to the sovereign. Many enthusiasts expected more than they had any right to expect, and were disappointed because the Queen did not at once do wonders for the removal of grievances, and the cure of national distress. Beyond these vague impressions, however, there were some real

causes of complaint, or at least of apprehension. It was seen very clearly that the young monarch had placed herself too unreservedly in the hands of one political connection. The offices about the Queen's person were filled by ladies belonging to the families of the chief Ministers. People said that Lord Melbourne was too much at the Palace; that he sought to occupy the position of a

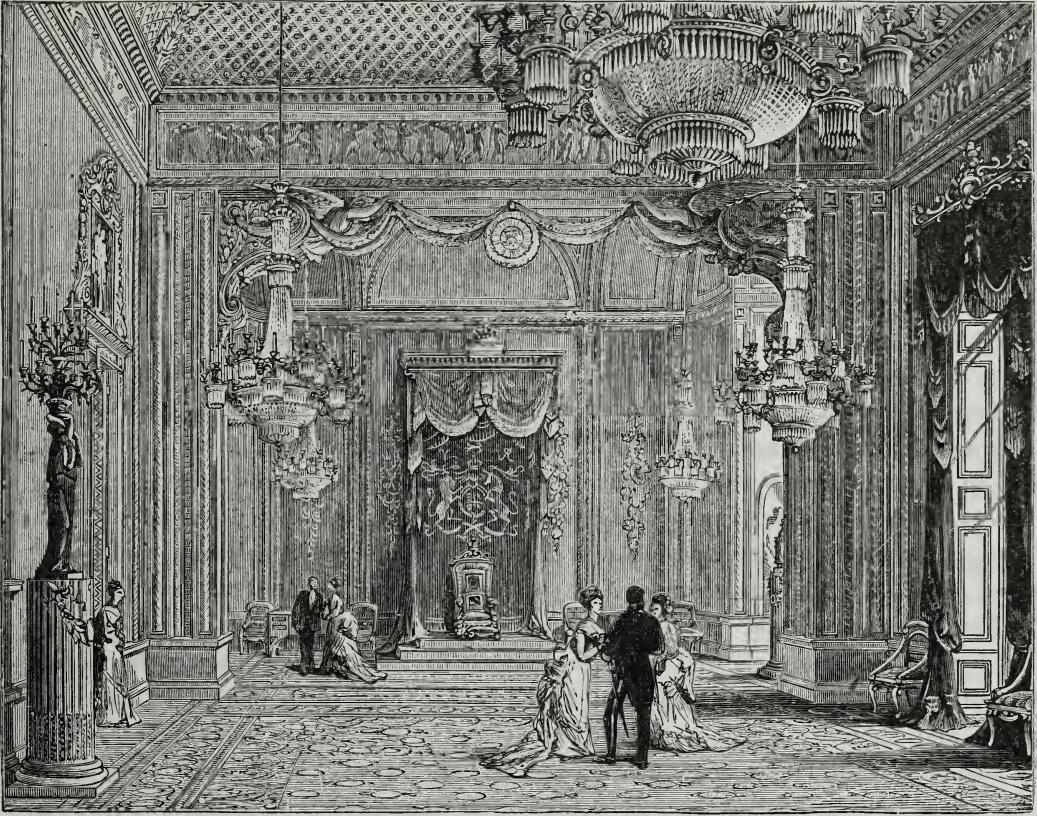


THE EARL OF DURHAM.

Mentor in all things; and that in the General Election the Queen showed a partiality for certain candidates who belonged to the faction then in power. Ministers and their supporters did really use the name and supposed leanings of her Majesty as a means of bolstering up a Cabinet which they knew to be generally unpopular; and persons were found to ask whether the English Court was always to be the appendage of an aristocratic coterie.

Under the influence of these feelings, some men were unmanly enough to attack the Queen in public with shameful imputations. The excitement, which began during the elections of 1837, had become almost frantic in 1839. The

Orangemen of Ireland, and the ultra-Protestants of England, believed, or affected to believe, that the sovereign was being influenced to destroy the reformed religion, and re-establish Papacy throughout her dominions. The Melbourne Administration supported religious liberty; to some extent, its members leant for support upon the Irish vote; the Queen favoured Lord Melbourne: therefore, her Majesty was inclined to Rome. Such were the stages by which these hot-headed reasoners



THE THRONE-ROOM, BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

arrived at their conclusion. Some placed their hopes in the Tory party; others openly declared that the Tories, could they only get possession of the sovereign, would poison her, and change the succession. Men recollected with an uneasy feeling that, in 1835, Mr. Joseph Hume, a conspicuous Radical member of Parliament, detected and unmasked an Orange plot for setting aside the rights of the Princess Victoria, and giving the crown to the Duke of Cumberland, on the ridiculous plea that, unless some such step were taken, the Duke of Wellington might seize the regal power for himself. The investigations which the Government were compelled to make raised a strong suspicion that the Duke of Cumberland was privy to this traitorous scheme. The English people were so delighted when he left for Hanover, after the death of William IV., that a cheap

medal was struck to commemorate the event; and his despotic rule in the small German kingdom amply justified their fears. Nothing more, it would seem, was to be dreaded from the fifth son of George III.; yet apprehensions of a conspiracy still remained.

It is a remarkable feature of the times that during all this commotion the Liberals were the loyal and courtly party, while many of the Tories indulged in fierce invectives against the monarch. On the one side, the Irish agitator, Daniel O'Connell, vaunted in the course of 1839 that he could bring together five hundred thousand of his countrymen to defend the life and honour of "the beloved young lady" who filled the English throne; on the other, a Mr. Bradshaw, member for Canterbury in the Tory interest, alleged, without any circumlocution, that the countenance of Queen Victoria, the ruler of Protestant England, was given to "Irish Papists and Rapparees," her Majesty, he added, being "Queen only of a faction, and as much of a partisan as the Lord Chancellor himself." This, indeed, was by no means the worst of the speaker's utterances; but his wildest flights of vituperation were received with enthusiastic cheers. It is but fair, however, to add that he afterwards apologised for his bad manners. At a meeting held at the Freemasons' Tavern, presided over by Lord Stanhope, a Chartist orator proposed to open a subscription for presenting the Queen with a skipping-rope and a birch-rod. Other persons spoke with equal violence, and in some instances the authorities even found it necessary to warn military officers, and civil servants of the Crown, against such disloyal utterances. One very painful incident occurred towards the end of June, 1839, when her Majesty was hissed on Ascot racecourse. It was represented to her that the Duchess of Montrose and Lady Sarah Ingestre were amongst the persons so acting: the Queen therefore showed her displeasure to those ladies at a State ball. The slander was apparently traced to Lady Lichfield, who denied it, first by word, and then by writing. With the letter in her hand, the Duchess went to the Palace, and required an audience of her Majesty, but, after being kept waiting a couple of hours, was refused, on the advice of Lord Melbourne. She was extremely angry, and insisted that a written statement should be laid before the Queen. These circumstances increased the unpopularity of the monarch, and she was coldly received at the prorogation of Parliament.

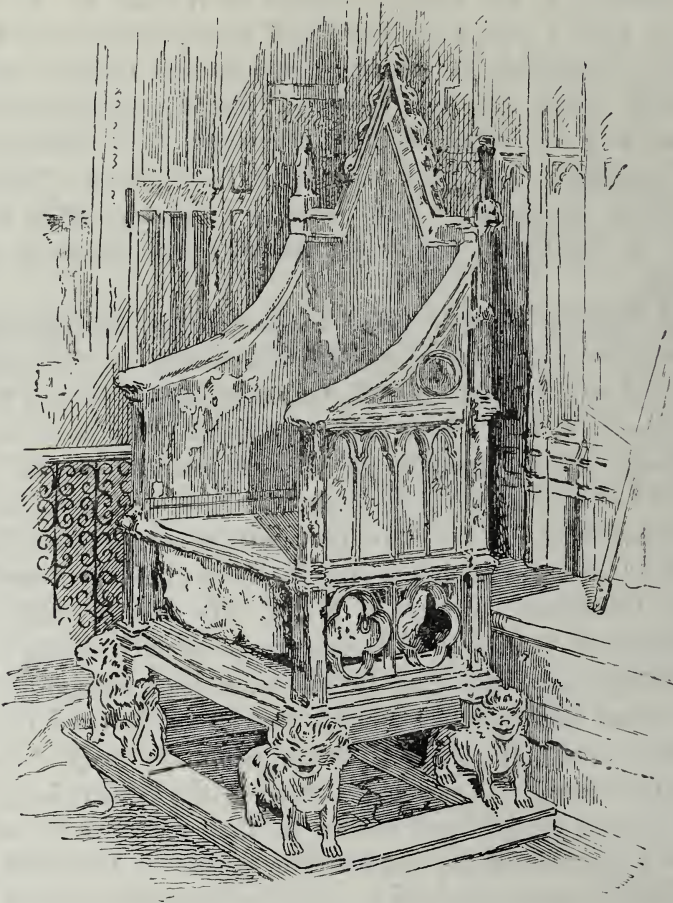
Yet, if people could have set aside their prejudices and passions, they would have found abundant evidence that the nature of the Queen was instinct with just and honourable feelings. She had been accustomed from childhood to live strictly within her income, and to deny herself any little gratification which could not be at once paid for in ready money. The same habit of virtuous prudence continued after her accession to the throne; and out of her savings she was enabled, during her first year of regal power, to discharge the heavy debts of her father, contracted before she was born. With respect to this matter, however, it should be mentioned that, according to a statement in the *Morning Post*, the Duke of Kent's executors had succeeded in Chancery in establishing their

claim against the Crown to the mines of Cape Breton, which had been made over to his Royal Highness for a period of sixty years dating from 1826, and that therefore the Crown must either have paid the Duke's debts, or suffered the mines to be worked for the benefit of the creditors. The Queen also paid her mother's debts, which, however, were in some respects her own, since they had in the main been incurred on her behalf. With a truly liberal and generous feeling, she continued to the natural children of William IV. by Mrs. Jordan the allowance of £500 a year each which had been granted them by the King. What was really regrettable in the early part of the Queen's reign was the completeness with which the new sovereign placed herself in the hands of Lord Melbourne and his clique, and which seemed for a time to set her in the light of a partisan. But what else could be expected of one so young, so inexperienced, so incapable by early training to assume all at once the full responsibilities of royalty? The fault was with the advisers, rather than with the advised.

The General Election of 1837 failed to rescue the Government from the difficult position they had long occupied. Threatened by the Radicals, who considered they did not move fast enough, they were obliged to lean for assistance on the Conservatives, without whose help they would often have been left in a minority. Ministers felt the ignominy of their lot, but were unable to amend it; and a painful set of incidents in the spring of 1838 gave occasion for a sharp attack on the Home Office. A few years previously, a person called John Nicholls Thom left his home in Cornwall, and settled in Kent, where he described himself as Sir William Courtenay, Knight of Malta. He was in truth a religious madman, claiming to be the King of Jerusalem, or, in other words, the Messiah; and multitudes of persons, belonging for the most part, though not entirely, to the poor and ignorant classes, believed in his assertions. Dressed in a fantastical costume, he went about the country, haranguing the people, and violently denouncing the Poor Law. He persuaded many of the farmers and yeomen that he was entitled to some of the finest estates in Kent, and that he would shortly be established as a great chieftain, when all the people on his lands should live rent-free. To the still more credulous he spoke of himself as Jesus Christ, and pointed in confirmation to certain marks in his hands and side, which he described as the wounds inflicted by the nails of the cross. Crowds followed him about, believing in his foolish miracles; some actually paid him divine honours; but a tragedy was approaching. On the 31st of May, 1838, Thom shot a constable who had interfered in his proceedings. The military were then summoned from Canterbury, when the rioters retreated into Bossenden Wood; a lieutenant who endeavoured to arrest the maniac was also shot dead; and a riot ensued, in which several persons, including Thom himself, were killed by the fire of the soldiers, and others wounded. It afterwards appeared that the man had previously been confined as a lunatic, but had been liberated the year before by Lord John Russell, acting as Home Secretary. For this, the latter was severely censured by

the Opposition in Parliament, and a select committee was appointed to inquire into the circumstances; but it was generally agreed that the Minister was not to blame in the matter.

In the first half of 1838, attention was drawn away from many distracting controversies by the preparations for crowning the new sovereign. The



THE CORONATION CHAIR, WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

imagination of the populace was powerfully affected by the thought of this gorgeous ceremony, and a Radical paper of the time observed that the commonalty had gone "coronation-mad." Political economists, however, fixed their thoughts upon the question of expense, and it was resolved that the charges should fall far short of those incurred for George IV., which amounted to £243,000. The crowning of his successor had cost the nation no more than £50,000; but it was stated in Parliament that the expenses for Victoria would be about £70,000—an increase on the previous reign due to the desire of Ministers to enable the great



THE CORONATION OF THE QUEEN. (After the Painting by Sir George Hayter.) [See p. 13.]

mass of the people to share in what was described as a national festivity. Some important alterations were introduced into the programme. The procession of the estates of the realm was to be struck out, and the accustomed banquet in Westminster Hall, with its feudal observances, was likewise marked for omission. To compensate for these losses, it was arranged that there should be a procession through the streets which all could see. The new arrangements were objected to by some of the upper classes; but there can be no question that the popularity of the show was greatly enhanced by these concessions to the wishes of the majority.

The coronation took place on the 28th of June. Although the day began with clouds and some rain, the weather afterwards cleared, and the pageantry was seen to great advantage. The streets were lined with spectators; an unbroken row of carriages moved on towards the Abbey; and the windows were crowded with on-lookers. At ten o'clock A.M., the Royal procession started from Buckingham Palace, and, passing up Constitution Hill, proceeded along Piccadilly, St. James's Street, Pall Mall, Cockspur Street, Charing Cross, Whitehall, and Parliament Street, to the west door of the grand old historic structure where the ceremonial was to take place. The carriages of the Ambassadors Extraordinary attracted much attention, especially that of Marshal Soult, which, so far as the framework was concerned, appears to have been the same as that used on occasions of state by the last great Prince of the House of Condé, one of the most famous military commanders of the seventeenth century. The gallant adversary of Wellington in the wars of the Peninsula was everywhere received with the heartiest cheers, and was so deeply touched by this cordiality of feeling on the part of his old opponents, that some years after he declared himself, in the French Chamber, a warm partisan of the English alliance. Westminster Abbey had been brilliantly decorated for the occasion. The ancient aisles glowed and shone with crimson and purple hangings, with cloth of gold, and with the jewels, velvets, and plumes of the peeresses; and when the procession entered at the west door, the effect was both magnificent and solemn.

It was half-past eleven when her Majesty reached the Abbey. Retiring for a space into the robing-room, she issued forth clad in the Royal robes of crimson velvet, lined with ermine, and embroidered with gold lace. Round her neck she wore the collars of the Garter, Thistle, Bath, and St. Patrick, and on her head a circlet of gold. It is mentioned that she looked very animated; and assuredly the scene was one well calculated to impress even the mind of a sovereign with a sense of lofty and almost overwhelming grandeur. The noble, time-honoured building, with half the history of England in its monuments and its memories, appealed powerfully to the moral sentiment; while the splendour of the decorations and the costumes was such as to hold the Turkish Ambassador entranced for some minutes. The peers and great officials, with their pages and other attendants, were gorgeously dressed; so also were the Foreign Ministers and their suites, and, in particular, Prince Esterhazy glittered with diamonds to

his very boot-heels. Her train upborne by the daughters of eight peers, preceded by the regalia, the Princes of the blood-royal, and the great officers of State, and followed by the ladies of the Court and the gentlemen-at-arms, the Queen advanced slowly to the centre of the choir, and, amidst the chanting of anthems, moved towards a chair placed midway between the chair of homage and the altar, where, kneeling on a faldstool, she engaged in private devotion. The ceremony of the coronation then commenced.

The first act was that which is called "the Recognition." Accompanied by some of the chief civil dignitaries, the Archbishop of Canterbury advanced, and said, "Sirs, I here present unto you Queen Victoria, the undoubted Queen of this realm; wherefore, all you who are come this day to do your homage, are you willing to do the same?" The question was answered by loud cries of "God save Queen Victoria!" and, after some further observances, her Majesty made her offerings to the Church, in the shape of a golden altar-cloth, and an ingot of gold of a pound weight. The strictly religious part of the ceremony followed, and, at the conclusion of a sermon preached by the Bishop of London, the Oath was administered in the manner usual on such occasions. The Queen then knelt again upon the faldstool, while the choir sang, "Veni, Creator Spiritus;" after which came the Anointing. Her Majesty seated herself in the historic chair of King Edward I., while the Dukes of Buccleuch and Rutland, and the Marquises of Anglesey and Exeter (all being Knights of the Garter), held a cloth of gold over her head. The Dean of Westminster next took the ampulla from the altar, and poured some of the oil into the anointing-spoon; whereupon the Archbishop anointed the head and hands of the Queen, marking them with the cross, and pronouncing the words,—“Be thou anointed with holy oil, as kings, priests, and prophets were anointed,” etc. A prayer or blessing was then uttered, and the investiture with the Royal Robe, the rendering of the Orb, and the delivery of the Ring and Sceptre, were the next ceremonies. The placing of the Crown on the sovereign's head was one of the most striking incidents of the day. As the Queen knelt, and the crown was placed on her brow, a ray of sunlight fell on her face, and, being reflected from the diamonds, made a kind of halo round her head.* At the same moment, the peers assumed their coronets, the Bishops their caps, and the Kings-of-Arms their crowns, thus adding greatly to the richness and dignity of the spectacle. Loud cheers were echoed from every part of the Abbey; trumpets sounded, drums beat; and the Tower and Park guns were fired by signal.

The Benediction, the Enthroning, and the formal rendering of Homage, now ensued. The last of these ceremonies had a singularly feudal character. First, the Archbishop of Canterbury knelt, and did homage for himself and the other Lords Spiritual; then the uncles of the Queen, the Dukes of Sussex and Cambridge, removed their coronets, and, without kneeling, made a vow of fealty in

* Recollections of Society in France and England, by Lady Clementina Davies. 1872.

these words:—"I do become your liege man, of life and limb, and of earthly worship; and faith and truth I will bear unto you, to live and die, against all manner of folks. So help me God!" Having touched the crown on the Queen's head, they kissed her left cheek, and retired. The other peers then performed their homage kneeling, the senior of each rank pronouncing the words. It was at this part of the day's proceedings that an awkward incident occurred—an incident, however, which served to bring out an amiable trait in the sovereign's character. As Lord Rolle, then upwards of eighty, was ascending the steps to the throne, he stumbled and fell. The Queen, forgetting all the ceremonious pomp of the occasion, started forward as if to save him, held out her hand for him to kiss, and expressed a hope that his Lordship was not hurt. Some rather obvious puns were made on the correspondence of the noble Lord's involuntary action with the title which he bore; and even his daughter was heard to remark, after it had been ascertained that no damage was done, "Oh, it's nothing! It's only part of his tenure to play the *roll* at the Coronation."

While the Lords were doing homage, the Earl of Surrey, Treasurer of the Household, threw silver medals about the choir and lower galleries, which led to a good deal of rather unseemly scrambling. The choir then sang an anthem, and the Queen received two sceptres from the Dukes of Norfolk and Richmond. Next, divesting herself of her crown, she knelt at the altar, and, after two of the Bishops had read the Gospel and Epistle of the Communion Service, made further offerings to the Church. She then received the Sacrament; the final blessing was given; and the choir sang the anthem, "Hallelujah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." Quitting the throne, and passing into the chapel of Edward the Confessor, while the organ played a solemn yet triumphant strain, her Majesty was relieved of her Imperial Robe of State, and arrayed in one of purple velvet. Thus adorned, with the crown upon her head, the sceptre with the cross in the right hand, and the orb in the left, the Queen presented herself at the west door of the Abbey, and, delivering the regalia to gentlemen who attended from the Jewel Office, re-entered the State carriage on her return to the Palace. It was by this time nearly four o'clock, but the streets were still crowded with sight-seers. The peers now wore their coronets, and the Queen her crown; the latter of which (together with the coronets of the Royal Family) blazed with diamonds and other precious stones. State dinners, balls, fireworks, illuminations, feasts to the poor, and a fair in Hyde Park, lasting four days, which was visited by the Queen herself, followed the splendid ceremony of which Westminster Abbey had been the theatre.

In many respects, the proceedings in the Abbey were grand and impressive; but Mr. Greville, the clerk of the Council, lets us a little behind the scenes in the Second Part of his Memoirs. "The different actors in the ceremonial," he writes, "were very imperfect in their parts, and had neglected to rehearse them. Lord John Thynne, who officiated for the Dean of Westminster, told me that



THE QUEEN RECEIVING THE SACRAMENT AT HER CORONATION.

(After the Painting by C. R. Leslie, R.A.)

nobody knew what was to be done except the Archbishop and himself (who had rehearsed), Lord Willoughby (who is experienced in these matters), and the Duke of Wellington; and consequently there was a continual difficulty and embarrassment, and the Queen never knew what she was to do next. They made her leave her chair, and enter into St. Edward's Chapel, before the prayers were concluded, much to the discomfiture of the Archbishop. She said to [Lord] John Thynne,



THE DUCHESS OF KENT.

‘Pray tell me what I am to do, for they don't know;’ and at the end, when the orb was put into her hand, she said to him, ‘What am I to do with it?’ ‘Your Majesty is to carry it, if you please, in your hand.’ ‘Am I?’ she said; ‘it is very heavy.’ The ruby ring was made for her little finger instead of the fourth, on which the rubric prescribes that it should be put. When the Archbishop was to put it on, she extended the former, but he said it must be on the latter. She said it was too small, and she could not get it on. He said it was right to put it there, and, as he insisted, she yielded, but had first to take off her other

rings, and then this was forced on; but it hurt her very much, and as soon as the ceremony was over she was obliged to bathe her finger in iced water in order to get it off. The noise and confusion were very great when the medals were thrown about by Lord Surrey, everybody scrambling with all their might and main to get them, and none more vigorously than the Maids of Honour."

There can be no doubt that on all these occasions mistakes and omissions are numerous. What accidents may have attended the coronation of Queen Elizabeth it is impossible to say, for there were no Memoir-writers in those days; but, in several of his letters, Horace Walpole gives some amusing anecdotes of the unpreparedness of the Court officials at the coronation of George III. In a communication to Sir Horace Mann, dated September 28th, 1761, he says:—"The heralds were so ignorant of their business, that, though pensioned for nothing but to register lords and ladies, and what belongs to them, they advertised in the newspaper for the Christian names and places of abode of the peeresses. The King complained of such omissions, and of the want of precedents: Lord Effingham, the Earl Marshal, told him it was true there had been great neglect in that office, but he had now taken such care of registering directions that *next coronation* would be conducted with the greatest order imaginable. The King was so diverted with this flattering speech that he made the Earl repeat it several times."

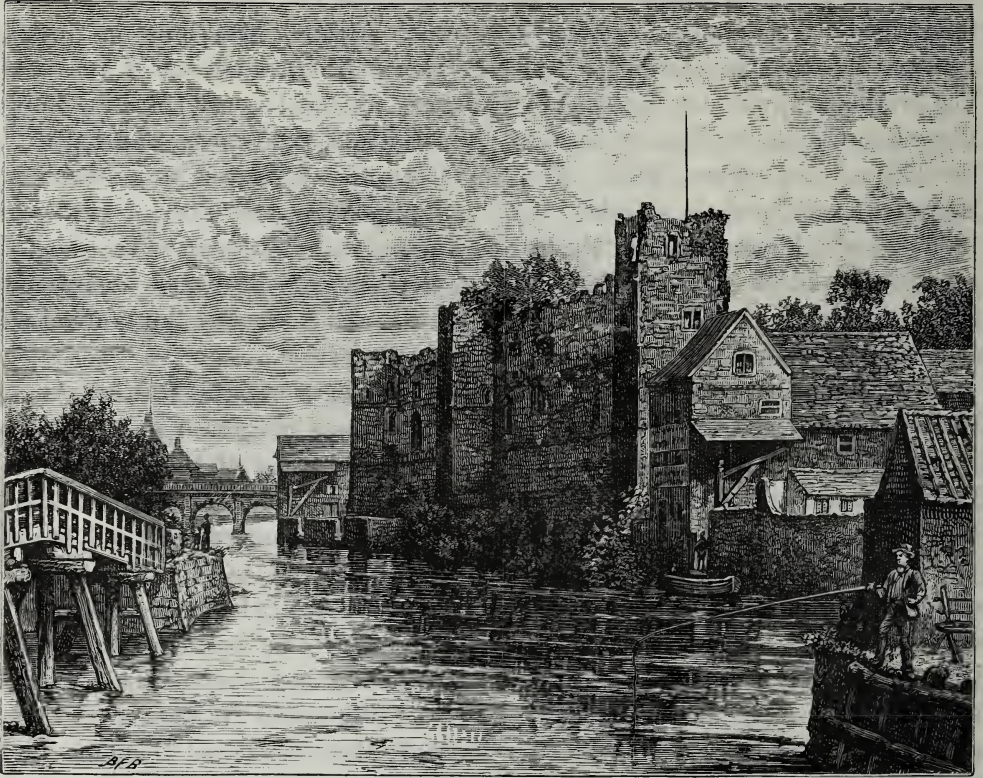
On the 4th of September, 1838, the King and Queen of the Belgians paid a visit to England. They landed at Ramsgate, and were escorted by Lord Torrington to the Queen at Windsor Castle, where they remained the guests of her Majesty. A fortnight later, a military review took place in Windsor Little Park, when the Queen appeared on horseback in the Windsor uniform, with the badge and ribbon of the Order of the Garter. She had King Leopold, in a Field Marshal's uniform, on her right, and Lord Hill, Commander of the Forces, on her left, followed by the Duke of Wellington and Lord Palmerston. The King and Queen of the Belgians left the Castle on the 20th, and embarked the following day for Ostend. It was a great delight to the English sovereign to have King Leopold as a visitor, for his advice on affairs of State was highly valuable.

The year 1838 was signalised, among other things, by some events showing the rapid change which science was making in the habits of society. On the 23rd of April, the *Great Western* steamer arrived at New York, after a voyage of fifteen clear days. This famous ship, and the *Sirius*, whose voyage was simultaneous almost to a day, were the first vessels which had crossed the Atlantic by steam-power alone, sails having been used in combination with steam on previous occasions. The *Great Western* was in those days the largest steamer ever known, her tonnage being equal to that of the largest merchant-ships. She was built at Bristol, and sailed from that port on the 7th of April. When she entered the harbour of New York, she had still a surplus of one hundred and forty-eight tons of coal on board, and the problem was solved as to whether a steamer could

be constructed large enough to carry sufficient fuel for so long a voyage. The size, tonnage, and speed of this historic vessel have been greatly surpassed in later times; but the fact of a ship crossing the Atlantic in fifteen days was a very genuine astonishment to the people of 1838. Two years later (1840), the Cunard line of steamers was established at Liverpool, which soon entirely eclipsed Bristol as the great commercial port on the western side of England, and as the packet-station for the American service. Another interesting feature of the year 1838 was the opening of the London and Birmingham Railway throughout its entire length. The precise date was the 17th of September, and thenceforward the railway system progressed rapidly. The line in question, however, was not the first that had been placed at the disposal of the public. The original railway for the use of passengers was that constructed by Edward Pease and George Stephenson between Stockton and Darlington, and opened on the 27th of September, 1825. The next was the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, commenced in October, 1826, and opened on the 15th of September, 1830—on which occasion, Mr. Huskisson, a prominent statesman of the time, was accidentally killed. Nevertheless, the development of the system is associated almost entirely with the reign of Queen Victoria, and we hardly think of railways as belonging, even in their inception, to an earlier period.

The Parliamentary Session of 1838 came to a close on the 16th of August. Having taken her seat on the throne, the Queen was addressed by the Speaker of the House of Commons on the subject of the suspension of the constitution of Lower Canada (which had been set aside as a preliminary to the introduction of more liberal arrangements when the rebellion should be suppressed), and on some other matters of less general interest. Her Majesty gave the Royal assent to a number of Bills, and then proceeded to read the Speech, which presents nothing of importance. The Government were heartily glad to be free for some months from the criticism and the menaces of a Parliament not very cordially inclined towards Lord Melbourne and his colleagues. When the House of Commons reassembled after the General Election in 1837, Ministers found themselves with a majority of only twelve. Conservative support saved them from discomfiture on several occasions; but this very fact was not unnaturally considered fatal to their reputation as Whigs. The breach between the Cabinet and the advanced section of the party became wider and more impassable during the session of 1838: the recess, therefore, came as an immense relief. In addition to their troubles in the Lower House, Ministers had to encounter, in the other branch of the Legislature, the invectives of Lord Brougham, who had quarrelled with his old friends in consequence of not being reappointed to the Chancellorship in 1835. The affairs of Canada, moreover, had brought the Whigs into collision with Lord Durham, whose nature was almost as passionate and imperious as that of Brougham himself. Their demerits were probably not so great as their enemies tried to show; but the conduct of affairs was weak, and Tories and Radicals were alike dissatisfied, though often for the most diverse reasons.

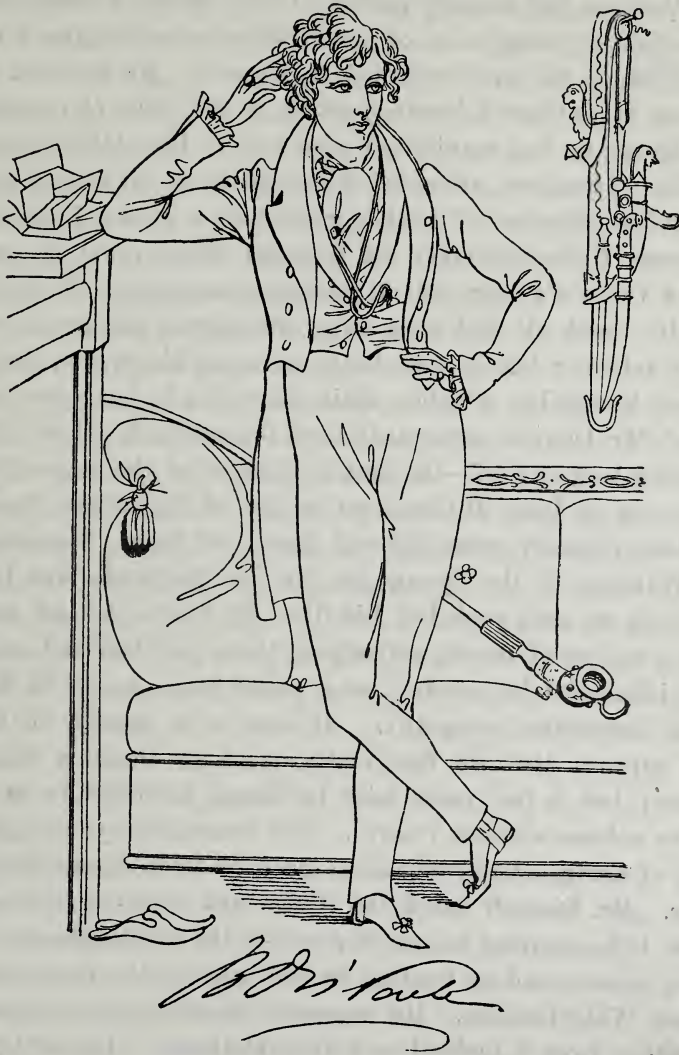
A good deal of discontent, also, was growing up in the country itself. The price of bread was high ; wages were low ; trade was not prosperous ; and the operation of the new Poor Law was considered unnecessarily harsh. In the autumn of 1838, meetings were held in various localities, at which some of the speakers addressed inflammatory language to the assembled people, who belonged to the artisan and labouring classes. A body of men had arisen, calling themselves Chartists. They demanded a Charter of popular rights, the six points of



NEWARK CASTLE.

which were Manhood Suffrage, Vote by Ballot, Annual Parliaments, Payment of Members, Abolition of the Property Qualification, and Equal Electoral Districts. Several of these objects have since been carried out, either wholly or nearly so ; but, in the days of which we write, they seemed dangerous and visionary in the highest degree. The middle classes, who had carried the Reform Bill of 1832 with the assistance of the grades below them, considered that enough had been done when their own interests were satisfied. A reaction had set in, and the prosperous were afraid of advancing on to the paths of revolution. Even Lord John Russell declared against further organic changes, and, in the absence of any leaders of distinguished social status, the humbler orders took the agitation into their own hands. A sentiment of vague discontent arose very speedily after the

passing of the great measure which changed the representation. Bad harvests and general distress gave acrimony to the spirit of political discussion, and in the summer of 1838 a committee of six Members of Parliament and six working men, assembling at Birmingham, prepared a Bill embodying their views of what



MR. DISRAELI IN HIS YOUTH. (After the Portrait by Maclise.)

was required by the country in general, and the labouring classes in particular. This was the document which soon afterwards received the name of "the People's Charter"—on the suggestion, it is said, of Daniel O'Connell. The direction of the movement fell into the hands of the more violent members. Physical force was threatened; torchlight meetings were held; processions were formed, in which guns, pikes, and other weapons were openly displayed; and on the 12th of

December the Government issued a proclamation against all such gatherings. Chartism, however, was not destroyed by this measure. Some degree of truth pervaded its extravagance, and its influence has been felt in later days.

It is about this period, or a little earlier, that we become aware of two great names in modern statesmanship, one of which is still potent in the political world, while the other has but recently passed into the sphere of completed history. Mr. Gladstone—then a young man of twenty-three—was returned for Newark, in December, 1832, to the first reformed Parliament. He was then a Conservative, with the same High Church leanings which, in the midst of considerable changes on other subjects, he has manifested ever since. His ability, his mental culture, and his habits of business, attracted the attention of Sir Robert Peel, who, in his short-lived Administration of 1834-5, made him a Junior Lord of the Treasury, and afterwards Under-Secretary for Colonial Affairs; but it was not until the beginning of Victoria's reign that he became conspicuous. Probably no one—not even himself—could at that time have anticipated the greatness he was subsequently to achieve; but he was slowly maturing his powers, and acquiring that extraordinary knowledge of public affairs for which he has since been famous.

His rival, Mr. Disraeli, afterwards Lord Beaconsfield, did not enter Parliament until the latter half of 1837—the first Parliament of the reign of Queen Victoria. He was the son of Isaac D'Israeli, an author of distinction, the descendant of a family of Jews, formerly connected with Spain and Italy. Isaac having quarrelled with the Wardens of the Synagogue, his son Benjamin was brought up as a Christian from an early period of his life. By 1837-8, he had made a name for himself by a variety of novels, embodying those political and social ideas which afterwards influenced his conduct as a public man—a sort of Toryism, with an infusion of democratic sympathy. It was as a species of Radical, though with Tory support, that he first endeavoured to obtain a seat in the House of Commons; but a few years later he found no difficulty in displaying the Conservative colours without reserve. The inconsistency, though of course not susceptible of being entirely explained away, was hardly so extreme as might at first appear. Mr. Disraeli hated the Whigs, and objected to several features of the Reform Bill, as giving too much power to the middle classes, and too little to the working classes, and as tending in this way to the increased predominance of the great Whig families. He appeared, therefore, to be attacking the same enemy, whether from a Radical or a Tory platform. In a letter written on the 17th of January, 1874, this was the explanation given by Mr. Disraeli himself. "It seemed to me," he said, "that the borough constituency of Lord Grey was essentially, and purposely, a Dissenting and low Whig constituency, consisting of the principal employers of labour, and that the ballot was the only instrument to extricate us from these difficulties." Probably, Mr. Disraeli was consistent from his own point of view, and in his devotion to certain leading ideas; but it is equally obvious that he was resolved to get into Parliament, and that he addressed his appeal at different times to different supporters.

The future Lord Beaconsfield was thirty-three years of age when he entered the House of Commons as the Conservative Member for Maidstone. He was five years older than Mr. Gladstone, and began his Parliamentary career five years later; but, from the close of 1837 to the summer of 1876, when Mr. Disraeli was advanced to the Peerage, both were members of the Lower House, except during the short interval between Mr. Gladstone's retirement from Newark in 1846 and his election for Oxford University in 1847. The appearance of the representative for Maidstone did not create a favourable impression. He was a dandy, of the type existing in those days, with the addition of a certain Hebrew extravagance and gorgeousness. His long black hair, his sallow countenance, his bottle-green coat and white waistcoat, his profusion of rings and gold chains, his strange gestures and general exaggeration of manner, excited a sense of the ludicrous which was not fortunate for the new-comer. His first attempt at oratory had a disastrous termination. A few years earlier, O'Connell had patronised young Disraeli; but they afterwards quarrelled on political grounds, and, in reply to a savage attack on himself by the Irish agitator, Mr. Disraeli had declared that, as soon as he obtained a seat in the House of Commons, he would inflict on that demagogue such a "castigation" as would make him repent the insults to which he had given utterance. On the 7th of December, 1837, during an Irish debate, he rose to acquit himself of this engagement. The speech had been elaborately prepared, but was too high-flown for the taste of the House. Certain it is that there were frequent interruptions and bursts of laughter; but a good deal of the disturbance appears to have originated with the Irish followers of Mr. O'Connell. The new member struggled bravely for a long time against this ungenerous opposition, but at length gave way, in these memorable words addressed to the Speaker:—"I am not at all surprised, Sir, at the reception I have met with. I have begun several times many things, and I have often succeeded at last. Ay, Sir, and, though I sit down now, the time will come when you will hear me."

The great figures of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli have occupied such prominent positions during the reign of Queen Victoria, that it has seemed necessary to make special reference to their rise as politicians. At this period, both sat on the Conservative side of the House. But their Conservatism was of two very different orders; Mr. Gladstone's being more of the steady, orthodox kind, while Mr. Disraeli's shot forth into novelties and unexpected developments, touching on autocracy in one direction, and on democratic power in another. The term "Conservative," it may be here remarked, arose about the commencement of the Queen's reign, or at any rate not long before. Since 1832, also, it had been not unusual for certain enthusiasts of the opposite party to call themselves Liberals; but the older members of both bodies preferred the historic appellations of Whig and Tory. "Radical" was another term belonging to the same epoch; so that we find, at the beginning of the Victorian era, all the party watchwords which are still active in the political arena.

The leading events in the earlier months of 1839 were the occupation of Aden, on the 20th of January, by the troops of the East India Company; the opening of Parliament by the Queen in person on the 5th of February; and the arrest by the Chinese Government, on the 7th of April, of Captain Elliot, the superintendent of British trade in China, who was compelled to deliver up opium to the value of £3,000,000. Aden is a town and harbour at the south-western extremity of Arabia. It was at that time a miserable collection of mud huts, containing not more than six hundred inhabitants, but is now, under English rule, a flourishing and populous place of trade, a coaling-station of the Anglo-Indian mails, and a singularly convenient position for communication with Asia and Africa. A British merchant-vessel having been shipwrecked off the coast of Aden, the barbarian natives of which plundered and ill-used the crew, a war-ship was despatched from Bombay in 1838, to oblige the reigning Sultan (a half-savage potentate) to make restitution. It is evident, however, that the East Indian authorities were rather glad of the incident, since it gave them a much-desired pretext for impressing on the petty sovereign of the country—with that persuasiveness which the presence of a ship-of-war so greatly facilitates—the desirability (from our point of view) of ceding Aden and the adjacent lands to the English. The Sultan agreed to the proposal, but afterwards endeavoured to break his promise, when he was compelled by force to submit.

Affairs of this nature have always their questionable side; but the Chinese war was much worse. An English factory was established at Canton in 1680, and several were in existence in 1839. A factory, in the Anglo-Indian sense of the word, is not a place of manufacture, but a place of trade. One of the principal trades we pursued at Canton was the trade in opium, which, having been grown in India, was smuggled into China, in defiance of the express prohibition of the Imperial Government. The use of opium ruined the health, and corrupted the whole moral nature, of innumerable Chinamen; but the culture and exportation of the poisonous drug yielded a large revenue to the Indian Government, as well as a great profit to the traders; and the reasonable wishes of the Chinese authorities were therefore to be disregarded. Frequent dissensions arose in consequence; and at length, in 1839, matters came to a crisis with the arrest of Captain Elliot, and the seizure of the opium over which he had control. A naval war, ultimately supported by a military force, soon afterwards broke out between England and China, and lasted, with brief interruptions, until the 29th of August, 1842, when a treaty of peace was concluded at Nankin, the Imperial sanction of which was received on the 15th of September. Amicable relations were thus re-established for a few years; but at a later period hostilities again broke out, owing to repeated misunderstandings between the British authorities and the Chinese Government. By the Treaty of 1842 (the formal ratifications of which were exchanged between the Emperor and Queen Victoria on the 22nd of July, 1843), it was provided that Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo, and Shanghai, should, in addition to Canton, be thrown open to the British, who were permitted to

maintain a consul at each of the five ports; and that the island of Hong-Kong should belong in perpetuity to England. We had succeeded by virtue of superior force; yet such triumphs yield nothing but a feeling of shame to any well-



THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ST. JAMES'S PALACE.

informed Englishman whose mind is not vitiated by false reasoning or self-interest. The Chinese fought in defence of their cities with a heroism which would have called forth the generous praises of Plutarch; and the pitiable spectacle of brave men slaying their wives and children, and then themselves, rather than fall into the hands of the enemy, should have burnt like red-hot iron into the consciences of the opium-mongers who provoked the war.

These were matters in which the Queen was not immediately concerned, though it would be unfitting to omit them from any account of her reign. But a complication had arisen in Jamaica which led to a Ministerial crisis in England, involving points of constitutional practice that were very important to her Majesty's position. Slavery had been abolished in Jamaica in the year 1834; but the troubles inseparable from that detestable system did not cease with its abrogation. The planters continued to be insolent and cruel. They evaded the new arrangements in every way they could, and placed themselves in systematic opposition to the Governors sent out from England, whose duty it was to see the laws enforced. The House of Assembly defied the Imperial Government, and ultimately refused to provide for the executive needs of the island until they were allowed to have their own way in all things. On the other hand, it is very probable that the negroes were often indolent, and sometimes presumptuous; though nothing is more surprising than the temper and self-control exhibited by the poor blacks on finding themselves suddenly invested with liberty. The Jamaica embroilment was made all the worse by the imprudence of Lord Sligo, who, while acting as Governor in 1836, committed a gross violation of the privileges of the Assembly. He was compelled by the Home Government to apologise, and soon afterwards gave place to Sir Lionel Smith, who, after a brief period of popularity, became as much at issue with the Assembly as his predecessors. The representative body refused to pass the most necessary laws, and expressed the greatest indignation at a Bill, sanctioned by the Imperial Parliament, for the regulation of prisons in Jamaica, where many cruelties were inflicted on the negroes. Nor was this all; for the unfortunate men of colour were frequently turned out of house and home, together with their families, and left to starve—a fate not absolutely impossible, even in the genial climate of a West India island. The state of things was becoming intolerable, and the Government of Lord Melbourne struck a venturesome blow.

A proposal was brought before Parliament in 1839 to suspend the constitution of Jamaica for five years, and to substitute during that period a provisional government appointed by the Home authorities. However regrettable in itself, the measure seems to have been justified by the circumstances; but the weakness of the Government invited attack on so favourable an opportunity for creating odium. The majority of twelve with which they commenced the new Parliament had by this time fallen even lower, and there was enough to say against their Jamaica policy to give the Opposition an excellent chance of success. The measure was indeed carried by a majority of five at the sitting of May 6th; but this was equivalent to a defeat, and the Ministry at once resigned. The announcement of their resolution was made on the 7th of May, and, on her Majesty sending for the Duke of Wellington on the 8th, she was advised by him to entrust the formation of a new Cabinet to Sir Robert Peel. Accepting this counsel, the Queen commanded the attendance of that statesman at Buckingham Palace, but at the outset encountered him with the discouraging remark that she

was much grieved to part with her late Ministers, whose conduct she entirely approved. She added, however, that she felt the step was necessary; that her first object was the good of the country; that she had perfect confidence in Sir Robert, and would give him every assistance in her power in carrying on the Government. Nothing was said on that occasion about the difficulty which afterwards arose, and the composition of the Cabinet proceeded without any material obstruction.

The next day, however, while talking over matters with his intended colleagues, Sir Robert Peel became for the first time aware that the person of the Queen was surrounded by ladies closely related to the Whig statesmen recently in office. This was very naturally considered as involving a special peril to the new Ministry; for, when it was remembered that the Queen had an avowed partiality for the ideas and political conduct of Lord Melbourne, it seemed almost inevitable that ladies so intimately connected with the Melbourne Government would use their position about her Majesty to prejudice and embarrass the incomers. In consequence of these apprehensions, Sir Robert Peel brought the subject before the notice of the sovereign on the same day (May 9th), and stated that, while no change would be required in any of the appointments below the rank of a Lady of the Bedchamber, he should expect that all of the higher class would at once resign. If such should not be the case, he should propose a change, although he thought that in some instances the absence of political feeling might render any alteration unnecessary. On the 10th of May, her Majesty wrote to the Conservative leader:—"The Queen, having considered the proposal made to her yesterday by Sir Robert Peel, to remove the Ladies of her Bedchamber, cannot consent to adopt a course which she conceives to be contrary to usage, and which is repugnant to her feelings." A few hours later, Sir Robert addressed a communication to the Queen, relinquishing his attempt to form a Government, and recapitulating the circumstances which, in his judgment, rendered that attempt impracticable.

It is difficult to come to any other conclusion than that Sir Robert Peel was right in the view which he took of this matter. He could not have carried on the administration of the country under a perpetual liability to backstairs intrigues. Besides, it was the opinion of very high authorities on constitutional law that the appointments of the Royal Household are State appointments, and therefore dependent on the Ministry of the day. Lord Melbourne and Lord John Russell, however, advised her Majesty to the contrary, and it was the members of the late Government, sitting in council by a questionable stretch of powers that were then merely provisional, who arranged the terms of the letter which the Queen addressed to Sir Robert Peel on the 10th of May. The leader of the Conservatives became for a few days the most unpopular man in England. It was supposed by the Queen, and rather sedulously spread abroad by the Melbourne party, that Peel desired to remove *all* her personal friends and familiar attendants; but, as we have seen, this was far from being the case. The Whigs endeavoured to create a factitious sentiment on behalf

of the Queen by stating that the ladies whose dismissal Peel demanded were "the friends of her Majesty's youth;" whereas they appear to have been scarcely known to her until their appointment at the beginning of the new reign. That appointment was made on purely political grounds, and the Duchess of Kent was not consulted in the matter. The facts were afterwards made clear by the statesman chiefly concerned; but a great deal of unmerited odium had been incurred, and, in particular, Daniel O'Connell and Feargus O'Connor denounced Sir Robert in unmeasured language, while pouring out fulsome eulogies on the sovereign whose lawful authority they were a few years later to dispute. When the truth became known, a strong reaction set in, and there can be no doubt that what was called the Bedchamber affair was one of the causes of that temporary unpopularity of the Queen to which we have before adverted.

The Melbourne Government resumed office on the 11th of May, and lost no time in adopting a minute in the following terms:—"Her Majesty's confidential servants, having taken into consideration the letter addressed by her Majesty to Sir Robert Peel on the 10th of May, and the reply of Sir Robert Peel of the same day, are of opinion that, for the purpose of giving to the Administration that character of efficiency and stability, and those marks of the constitutional support of the Crown, which are required to enable it to act usefully to the public service, it is reasonable that the great officers of the Court, and situations in the Household held by Members of Parliament, should be included in the political arrangements made in a change in the Administration; but they are not of opinion that a similar principle should be applied or extended to the offices held by ladies in her Majesty's Household." Two years later (at the suggestion of Prince Albert), the question was settled by a compromise which substantially conceded what Sir Robert Peel had required. The restored Whigs introduced another Jamaica Bill, of a less stringent character, which they carried with the assistance, and under the correction, of the Tories; and the session closed in the midst of general distraction, and the errors of a feeble rule.



COBURG. (*After a Sketch by Prince Albert.*)

CHAPTER IV.

COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE.

English Chartism in the Summer of 1839—Riots in Birmingham—Principal Leaders of the Chartist Party—Excesses of the Artisans in Various Parts of Great Britain and Ireland—Chartist Rising at Newport, Monmouthshire—Conviction of Frost, Williams, and Jones—The Queen and Prince Albert—Early Life of the Prince—His Engaging Qualities—Desire of King Leopold to Effect a Matrimonial Engagement between Prince Albert and the Princess Victoria—First Visit of the Former to England—His Studies in Germany—Informal Understanding between Prince Albert and Queen Victoria—Difficulties of the Case—The Prince's View of the Matter in the Autumn of 1839—Second Visit to England, and Formal Betrothal—Letter of Baron Stockmar on the Subject—Announcement of the Royal Marriage to the Privy Council and to Parliament—The Appointment of the Prince's Household—Subjects of Difficulty and Dissension—Question of the Prince's Religion—Reduction of his Annuity by a Vote of the House of Commons—Progress from Gotha to England, and Reception at Buckingham Palace—Marriage of Prince Albert to the Queen at the Chapel Royal, St. James's.

AN event of peculiar interest to her Majesty, and almost equally to the nation at large, took place in the second half of 1839; but, before relating the circumstances attending the Queen's engagement to Prince Albert, it will be desirable to pass in rapid review the state of the country at that period—a state which might well have persuaded a young female sovereign of the need of sharing her responsibilities with one of the stronger sex. The Government, as we have seen, was extremely weak; Ireland, as usual, was giving the utmost trouble; the Colonies were agitated; and England itself was almost on the

brink of revolution, owing to the distress existing among the labouring classes, and the incitements of the Chartists. The last of these dangers was the greatest of all. Hunger was preaching insurrection to thousands and tens of thousands of the poor and humble all over the kingdom; some few designing men, and scores of others who, however mistaken in their methods, were sincere and even noble in their aims, were thrusting the pike and the torch into the hands of maddened operatives; and the authorities, for a time, seemed paralysed. On the 14th of June, Mr. Attwood, Member for Birmingham, presented to the House a Chartist petition, signed, it was said, by 1,280,000 persons, and adopted at five hundred public meetings. It was at any rate sufficiently heavy to task the strength of twelve men to carry it out of the House; yet when Mr. Attwood, on the 12th of July, brought forward a motion to submit the grievances described in the petition to a select committee, he could obtain only forty-six votes, against 235 on the adverse side. On the 4th of July, a Chartist riot broke out in Birmingham, during which some policemen, sent from London, were severely handled. It was found necessary to call out the military, and for a time the disturbance seemed at an end. But on the 15th of the same month a much worse rising filled the whole town with consternation. Shops were sacked, houses set on fire in several localities, and the firemen obstructed and menaced in their attempts to extinguish the flames. Property was destroyed to the amount of nearly £50,000, and the vicinity which suffered most was afterwards described by the Duke of Wellington as presenting a worse appearance than that of a city taken by storm.

It was believed by superficial thinkers that these excesses would prove the death of Chartism; and, under this impression, the Attorney-General, Sir John Campbell, afterwards Lord Chief Justice of England, made a speech at a public dinner at Edinburgh on the 24th of October. He even spoke of Chartism as a thing already extinguished, and considered that the punishment of the rioters had brought the whole matter to an end. But the movement was served by some men of zeal, earnestness, and intellectual capacity, and it had aroused the deepest feelings of countless men and women who had no voice in the government of the country, and who undoubtedly suffered in divers ways. One of the principal leaders of the party, but by no means one of the wisest, was the Irishman, Feargus O'Connor—an agitator by taste and profession, who nevertheless claimed to be descended from the old kings of Ireland. There were others who said that he was the grandson of one Conyers, an Essex farmer who settled in the sister island, and whose son thought it prudent to Hibernicise his name. If so, the redoubtable Feargus was not so Irish as he seemed; but, however this may have been, he preferred to throw himself into the vortex of English agitation, leaving the Irish work to O'Connell. More reasonable, more argumentative, and more profoundly sincere, were Thomas Cooper, a poet of some power and passion; Henry Vincent, an effective lecturer; and Ernest Jones, a writer for the periodical press. These were all men of decided

ability; and their advocacy of Chartist principles gave a more solid character to what might otherwise have passed off in effervescence.

On the other hand, it is not to be denied that the working classes, maddened by sufferings which their ignorance often led them to impute to wrong causes, committed many deplorable and guilty actions. At the direct incentive of the Trades-Unions, the factory hands sent threatening letters to the masters, fired the mills, made murderous attacks on such of their fellow-workmen as were willing to serve for lower wages, destroyed valuable machinery, and kept a large part of England, Scotland, and Ireland in perpetual terror. Chartism, by its assertion of political principles, whether right or wrong, did a certain amount of good, by giving another direction to all this turbulent socialism. Yet Chartism itself had its excesses, and, after the riots at Birmingham and elsewhere, the Government became alarmed. There were physical-force Chartists as well as moral-force Chartists; and at first the former were the more prevailing. The manufacturing districts were almost in a state of rebellion when, in the autumn of 1839, Henry Vincent was imprisoned at Newport, Monmouthshire, for delivering seditious speeches. There was at that time in Newport a respectable tradesman named John Frost, who had until recently been a magistrate of the borough, but whose use of intemperate language at a public meeting had caused his removal from the post. This dangerous egotist, or enthusiast, whichever he may have been, determined on making a bold attempt to rescue Vincent. He collected a vast body of armed men, marched seven thousand into the town on the 4th of November, while a great many more remained on the surrounding hills, and proceeded to the Westgate Hotel, where the magistrates were sitting.

The authorities knew something of what was about to happen, and had made as much preparation as they could. Thirty soldiers and some special constables were assembled in the building, and made a good defence. Frost's men fired into the hotel, and wounded the Mayor, Mr. Phillips, together with several others. The soldiers returned the fire, killed and wounded a good many, and struck such terror into the rest that, with the want of spirit usually displayed by English mobs, they fled in confusion, notwithstanding their immense superiority in numbers. Frost was soon arrested, together with two other ringleaders, named Williams and Jones, and some of their followers. They were tried in January, 1840, on a charge of high treason, it being evident that, over and above the rescue of Vincent, the conspirators intended to form a junction with the malcontents of Birmingham and other large manufacturing towns, and thus create a general rising. The three leaders were found guilty, and sentenced to death; but, owing to some informality in the proceedings, this was afterwards commuted to transportation for life, and even the milder punishment was subsequently curtailed. An amnesty having been granted to Frost, Williams, and Jones, on the 3rd of May, 1856, they returned to England in the September of that year, to find everything wonderfully altered since they left. Other

Chartist risings took place in the latter part of 1839 and the beginning of 1840, or were nipped in the bud by the vigilance of the authorities. The country was in a state of seething discontent, and it says much for the mingled leniency and firmness of the Government that the army was not called upon to suppress an insurrection.

While the working classes of Great Britain were thus starving and conspiring, and while the aristocracy (in the late summer of 1839) were amusing themselves with the theatrical jousts of the Eglintoun Tournament, her Majesty was advancing towards the most important event of her personal life. Her affection for her cousin, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, dated back some years; but it was not until 1839 that a matrimonial alliance was effected. The Prince was the second son of Duke Ernest I. of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld (brother of the Duchess of Kent), and of his wife, the Princess Louise, daughter of the Duke of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg. He was born at the Rosenau (a summer residence of his father, situated about four miles from Coburg) on the 26th of August, 1819. The future husband of the Queen was thus about a quarter of a year younger than herself; and at the time of the formal engagement he was but a youth of twenty. From his childhood he had given proof of an excellent disposition, and, as he gained in years, he became extremely intelligent and studious. It is easy to flatter a Prince, and many tongues are always ready to perform the task. But it seems to be the absolute truth to say of Prince Albert that his nature was manly, sincere, and affectionate; that his life was blameless and discreet; and that his intellect and acquirements were remarkable, even at an early age. Added to this, he was graced with physical beauty and pleasing manners; so that in more ways than one he attracted the attention of many observers.

When, in 1836, it became evident that the Princess Victoria must, in all human probability, succeed to the British throne, her uncle, King Leopold, was very desirous of effecting a marriage between his niece and his nephew. He well knew how terrible would be the weight of Imperial sovereignty on the head of a young, inexperienced girl, and he wished to lighten the burden by the constant advice and guidance of a conscientious husband. On this subject he consulted with his valued friend and private adviser, Baron von Stockmar, a man of great judgment and experience, and of a proportionate honesty and independence. Stockmar thought well of the young Prince, but would not commit himself to a positive opinion until he had seen more of him. A visit to Kensington Palace was subsequently arranged with the Duchess of Kent, and Prince Albert came to England, with his father and brother, in May, 1836. This was his first acquaintance with the country which he was afterwards to regard as almost his own; and it laid the foundations of the subsequent union. The Prince, it was obvious, had made a very favourable impression on the Princess. How far the former was affected could not as yet be ascertained; but he knew that the marriage was considered desirable, and he must of

necessity have been flattered by the possibility of such a future. About the same period, King Leopold made his niece aware of his wishes on the subject, and the answer of the Princess showed that *his* hopes were also her own.

During the next few years, Prince Albert pursued his studies in Germany,



PRINCE ALBERT.

chiefly at the University of Bonn. After keeping three terms there, and earning the highest praises from the several professors, he left in September, 1838, and in the ensuing months paid visits to Switzerland and Italy. Returning to his own country in the early summer of 1839, he was formally declared of age a little before the completion of his twentieth year. The Prince had all along continued to take a great interest in his cousin, and many were the rumours, both in Germany and England, that he was her affianced husband. But the statement was premature, for nothing had been

settled as yet. Still, though there was no formal engagement, it came to be gradually understood that the English Queen and the young Saxon Prince stood in a certain relation of mutual fidelity, though not of an absolutely binding order. William IV. had always been greatly opposed to the contemplated match, and formed various schemes for his niece's marriage, the most favoured of which had Prince Alexander of the Netherlands for its object. But there was now no hindrance in the way of the Queen's wishes, and everything conspired towards one result. The Dowager Queen Adelaide subsequently told her illustrious relative that the King would never have attempted to influence his niece's affections, had he known they were bestowed in any particular quarter. Yet a disagreeable impression had been produced, which could not be entirely obliterated at a later period.

Attached as she was to the Prince, the Queen desired to postpone the marriage for a few years, partly because of her cousin's extreme youth. The visit of Albert to Windsor Castle in October, 1839, however, decided the matter. It was indeed the desire and intention of the Prince himself to come to a definite understanding on the question. He considered, not unreasonably, that if he was to keep himself free, and to decline any other career which might seem likely, he ought to have some positive assurance that the engagement, of which so much had been said, would really be carried out. He even admitted in after life that he was not without some fear lest the Queen should be playing on his feelings. It must be recollected, however, that the position of her Majesty, as a sovereign, from whom the first advances must proceed, and yet as a woman, from whom a certain reserve is expected, was one of great difficulty. In the autumn of 1839, the Prince had resolved to declare himself free, if further postponement were required; but the course of events made it quite unnecessary that he should speak to any such effect. Her Majesty was unable to resist the combined force of the young Prince's good looks and fascinating manners. All previous hesitation disappeared, and, on the 14th of October, she informed Lord Melbourne of her intention. The Premier, we are told, showed the greatest satisfaction at the announcement, adding the expression of his conviction that it would not only make the Queen's position more comfortable, but would be well received by the country, which was anxious for her marriage.* "A woman," he observed, "cannot stand alone for any time, in whatever position she may be." On the following day, an understanding was come to between the parties chiefly concerned, and all that remained was the execution of the formal arrangements. A month later (November 14th), the Prince and his elder brother left London for Wiesbaden, where they found the King of the Belgians and Baron Stockmar awaiting them. This was a time of great letter-writing, and a communication from Stockmar to the Baroness Lehzen (one of the governesses of the Princess Victoria), dated December 15th, 1839, is particularly noticeable.

"With sincere pleasure," writes the Baron, "I assure you, the more I see

* Sir Theodore Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort*.

of the Prince, the better I esteem and like him. His intellect is so sound and clear, his nature so unspoiled, so childlike, so predisposed to goodness as well as truth, that only two external elements will be required to make of him a truly distinguished Prince. The first of these will be the opportunity to acquire a proper knowledge of men and of the world; the second will be intercourse with Englishmen of experience, culture, and integrity, by whom he may be made thoroughly conversant with their nation and constitution. . . . As regards his future relation to the Queen, I have a confident hope that they will make each other happy by mutual love, confidence, and esteem. As I have known the Queen, she was always quick and acute in her perceptions; straightforward, moreover, of singular purity of heart, without a trace of vanity or pretension. She will consequently do full justice to the Prince's head and heart; and, if this be so, and the Prince be really loved by the Queen, and recognised for what he is, then his position will be right in the main, especially if he manage at the same time to secure the good will of the nation. Of course he will have storms to encounter, and disagreeables, like other people, especially those of exalted rank. But, if he really possess the love of the Queen and the respect of the nation, I will answer for it, that after every storm he will come safely into port. You will therefore have my entire approval, if you think the best course is, to leave him to his own clear head, his sound feeling, and excellent disposition."

It was the original intention of the Queen to make the first notification of her contemplated marriage to Parliament; but she afterwards considered that the Privy Council was the fittest body for the purpose. The Council met on the 23rd of November at Buckingham Palace—an unusually large assemblage of eighty-three members. Wearing a bracelet with the Prince's portrait—which, as she subsequently recorded in her Journal, "seemed to give her courage"—her Majesty read to the Council a declaration of her intention to contract a union, of which she declared her belief that it would at once secure her domestic felicity, and serve the interests of her country. Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha was indicated as the object of her choice; and the declaration concluded with the words:—"I have thought fit to make this resolution known to you at the earliest period, in order that you may be apprised of a matter so highly important to me and to my kingdom, and which, I persuade myself, will be most acceptable to all my loving subjects." When the Queen had finished reading, Lord Lansdowne rose, and asked, in the name of the Council, that her Majesty's welcome communication might be printed. Leave was given, and the declaration was published in the next *Gazette*, whence it was copied into the newspapers. Some intelligence of the statement to be made to the Privy Council had found its way into the public mind; and, on leaving the Palace, her Majesty was cheered with more than usual warmth.

The announcement to the Legislature was made in the Queen's Speech at the opening of the next session, January 16th, 1840. At the same time, her Majesty expressed her conviction that Parliament would provide for such an

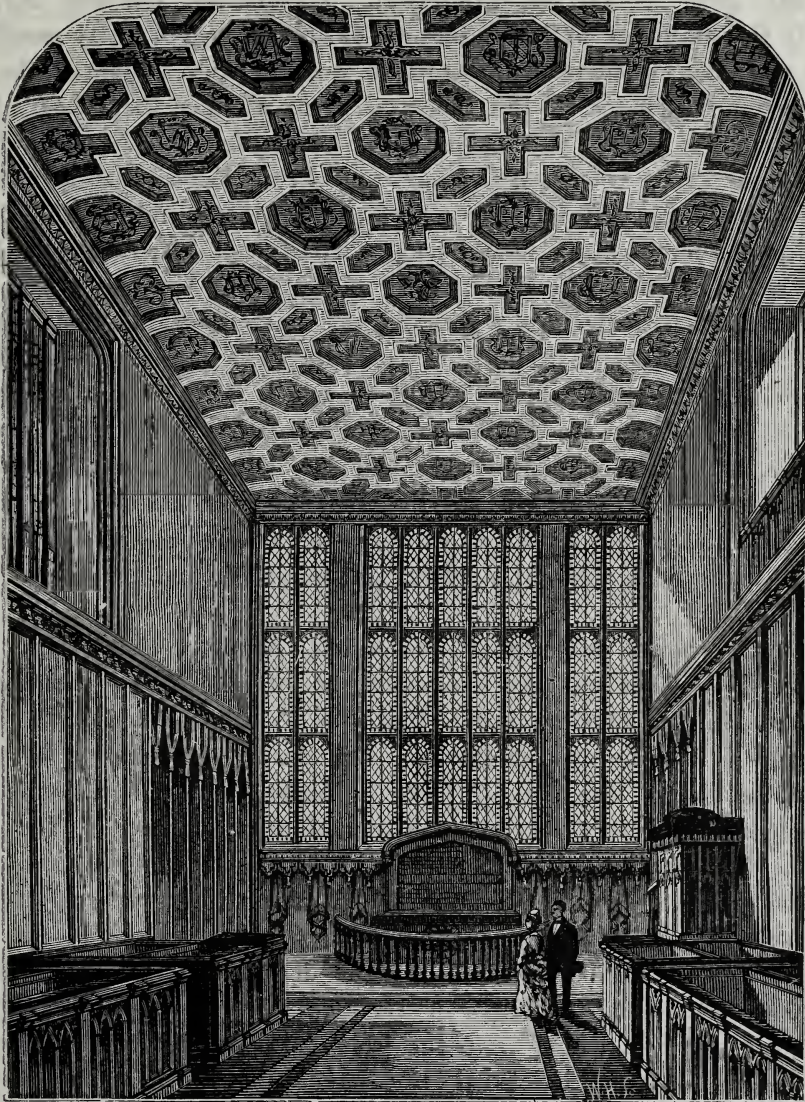
establishment as might appear suitable to the rank of the Prince and the dignity of the Crown. In the meanwhile, some difficulties had arisen with regard to various matters of detail. The settlement of the Prince's household was no very easy business. With admirable sense, Albert wrote to her Majesty on the



THE MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE.

10th of December, 1839 :—"I should wish particularly that the selection should be made without regard to politics, for, if I am really to keep myself free from all parties, my people must not belong exclusively to one side. Above all, these appointments should not be mere 'party rewards,' but they should possess some other recommendation, besides that of political connection. Let the men be either of very high rank, or very accomplished, or very clever, or persons who have performed important services for England. It is very necessary they should

be chosen from both sides—the same number of Whigs as of Tories; and, above all, it is my wish that they should be men well educated and of high character, who, as I have said, shall have already distinguished themselves in their several



INTERIOR OF THE CHAPEL ROYAL, ST. JAMES'S.

positions, whether it be in the army or navy, or the scientific world. I am satisfied you will look upon this matter precisely as I do, and I shall be much pleased if you will communicate what I have said to Lord Melbourne, so that he may be fully aware of my views."

These most reasonable suggestions were disregarded, and, without any consultation of the Prince's wishes on a matter which closely concerned himself,

the post of Private Secretary was conferred on Mr. Anson, who had long discharged the same functions for the Premier. This was evidently another attempt of the Whig Ministry to obtain a permanent influence over the Palace. Prince Albert protested against the appointment, only to be told that the matter had gone too far for withdrawal. Fortunately, however, Mr. Anson showed, in the discharge of his duties, an entire absence of party predilections, together with many positive qualities which won the high esteem of the Prince. A question much debated at the time was as to whether the Queen's husband should be made a peer of the realm, as had been done in the case of Queen Anne's consort, Prince George of Denmark; but Prince Albert himself resisted the suggestion, which was certainly one of very questionable wisdom. The consideration of precedence was also a knotty point. The Queen desired that her husband should take precedence immediately after herself; but her uncle, the King of Hanover, refused to waive his right, and the Duke of Wellington, speaking on behalf of the Tory peers, declined to consent. The question was afterwards withdrawn from the Naturalisation Bill to which it had been attached, and was settled by an exercise of the Royal Prerogative, which, as a species of compromise, both political parties accepted. By letters patent, issued on the 5th of March, 1840, it was provided that the Prince should thenceforth, "upon all occasions, and in all meetings, except when otherwise provided by Act of Parliament, have, hold, and enjoy, place, pre-eminence, and precedence next to her Majesty."

There were worse subjects of dissension, however, than those already mentioned. No sooner was the announcement of the Royal marriage made public than sinister rumours arose that the Prince was a Roman Catholic. Others averred that he was an infidel. But the most damaging because the most definite charge was that of being a Papist; and this was strengthened by the singular and very careless omission of any reference to the Prince's religion in the declaration to the Privy Council and to Parliament. King Leopold of Belgium saw the imprudence of giving the least opportunity for doubt or cavil; but Ministers would not or could not recognise the danger. Debates took place in both Houses in the discussion on the Address, and, in the House of Lords, the Duke of Wellington carried a motion for introducing the word "Protestant" into the Congratulatory Address to the Queen. It was on this occasion that Lord Brougham, referring to some observations of Lord Melbourne, made use of the memorable words:—"I may remark that my noble friend is mistaken as to the law. There is no prohibition as to marriage with a Catholic. It is only attended with a penalty, and that penalty is *merely the forfeiture of the Crown.*" The Protestantism of Prince Albert was in truth well known, and so was that of his family, with but few exceptions. In a letter to the Queen, dated December 7th, 1839, the Prince said:—"There has not been a single Catholic Princess introduced into the Coburg family since the appearance of Luther in 1521. Moreover,

the Elector, Frederick the Wise of Saxony, was the very first Protestant [Protestant Prince?] that ever lived." Still, it was remiss of the Government not to make the desired declaration, especially as some of the Prince's relatives had become Romanists. People generally have but little historic knowledge; and indeed the subject was one which history did not much avail to settle.

While the Lords were raising a question as to the Protestantism of the Prince, and making difficulties in the matter of precedency, the Commons were considering the position of the new-comer from a financial point of view. On the 24th of January, 1840, Lord John Russell moved "that her Majesty be enabled to grant an annual sum of £50,000 out of the Consolidated Fund for a provision to Prince Albert, to commence on the day of his marriage with her Majesty, and to continue during his life." Three days after, Mr. Joseph Hume, faithful to his character as a guardian of the public purse, moved as an amendment that £21,000, instead of £50,000, be voted annually to Prince Albert. He would even have preferred that no grant whatever should be made to the Prince during her Majesty's lifetime; but in this respect he had yielded to the wishes of his friends. Mr. Hume asked what was to be done with such a sum as the Government proposed to grant, and courteously remarked that Lord John Russell must know the danger of setting a young man down in London with so much money in his pockets. The amendment was lost by 305 votes against 38—a majority so enormous that it might well have discouraged any further opposition. Yet, on the very same evening, Colonel Sibthorp, a member of the Tory Opposition, moved that £30,000 should be the extent of the annuity, and, being supported by nearly all the Conservatives, as well as by the Radicals, and even some of the Whigs, he carried his proposal by 262 votes against 158. There was in truth a good deal to be said in favour of the smaller sum, though the suggestion roused Lord John Russell almost to fury, as if an actual personal affront to the Queen were intended. The country was in great distress; agriculture and manufactures were alike suffering; the poverty of large classes was extreme; taxation was oppressively heavy; and the revenue showed an ever-increasing deficit. Under these circumstances, the reduction of the annuity was essentially just and fair. The matter was decided on the 27th of January—the same day that the Government were so strenuously resisted in the House of Lords on the Precedency question as to see the necessity of separating it from the Naturalisation Bill. These circumstances induced in Prince Albert, for a short time, a fear lest his marriage to the Queen would not be popular with the English people; but he was soon undeceived on this point by the representations of his friends in England.

On the day following Colonel Sibthorp's successful amendment with respect to the annuity, the Prince, accompanied by Lord Torrington and Colonel (afterwards General) Grey, who had been sent to invest him with the insignia of the Garter, and conduct him ceremoniously to England, set out from Gotha,

accompanied by his father and brother. In the course of the journey, King Leopold was visited at Brussels, and the party then proceeded to Calais, where they were met by Lord Clarence Paget, commanding the *Firebrand*, in which the Prince and his companions were conveyed to the shores of Kent. They landed at Dover on the 6th of February, and met with a very hearty reception. This was repeated at Canterbury, and at every other place along the line of route,



COURTYARD OF ST. JAMES'S PALACE.

while at London the enthusiasm was marked and unmistakable. Buckingham Palace was reached on the afternoon of February 8th, when the Prince found her Majesty and the Duchess of Kent waiting at the door to greet him. In a little while, the Lord Chancellor administered the oath of naturalisation, and a banquet followed in the evening. The Prince was fairly settled in his new home.

The marriage was celebrated in the Chapel Royal, St. James's, on the 10th of February, 1840. An unusually large crowd assembled in St. James's Park and its approaches, notwithstanding the severity of the weather, which did not become sunny until after the return of the bridal party from the chapel. Prince Albert wore the uniform of a British Field Marshal, with the insignia of the Garter, the jewels of which had been presented to him by the Queen. On

one side of the carriage sat the Prince's father, on the other side his brother; both in uniform. A squadron of Life Guards formed the escort to the chapel, and the bridegroom was loudly cheered. Her Majesty soon afterwards



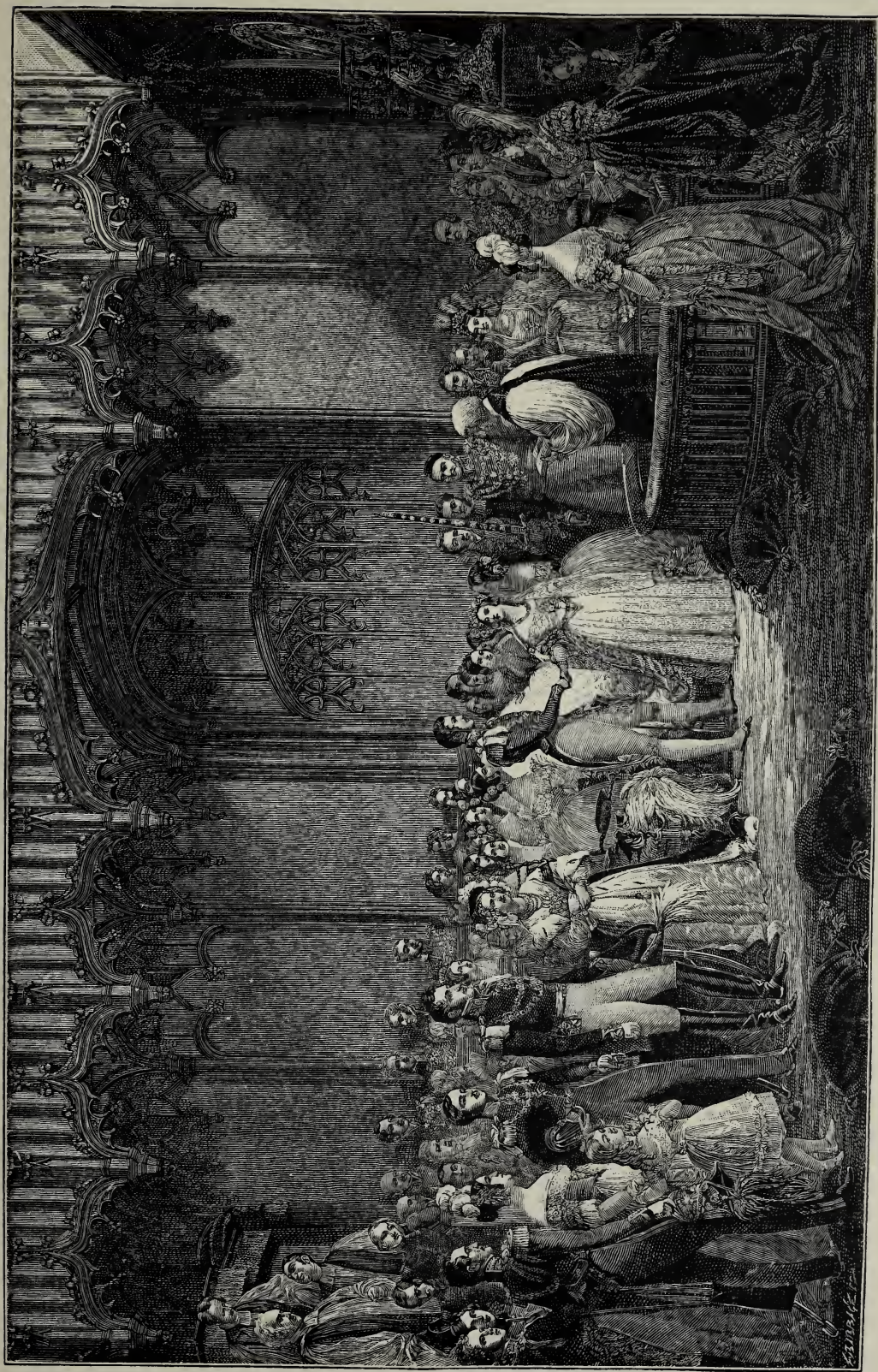
DUKE ERNEST, OF SAXE COBURG-GOTHA, PRINCE ALBERT'S BROTHER.

followed, with the Duchesses of Kent and Sutherland. She looked pale and anxious, but smiled every now and then at little incidents occurring among the crowd. The somewhat dusky old palace was brightened up for the occasion by temporary decorations, and still more by the presence of splendidly-dressed ladies, picturesque officials, gentlemen-at-arms, yeomen of the guard, heralds,

pages, and cuirassiers. The altar of the Chapel Royal was set out with a great deal of gold plate, and four State chairs were provided for the Queen, Prince Albert, the Queen Dowager (Adelaide), and the Duchess of Kent. The ceremony was performed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and the Bishop of London. All present admired the calm grace and dignified deportment of the Prince; but of course the great object of interest was the Queen herself. She looked excited and nervous, and, according to a letter from the Dowager Lady Lyttelton (one of the ladies-in-waiting), her eyes were swollen with tears, although great happiness appeared in her countenance. The Duchess of Kent is said to have been disconsolate and distressed; while the Duke of Sussex, who gave away the bride, was in the gayest spirits. The *John Bull*—a high Tory journal, edited by Theodore Hook, the motto of which was, “For God, the Sovereign, and the People!”—remarked that the Duke of Sussex was always ready to give away what did not belong to him. It should be understood that the sovereign whom Hook set up his paper to champion was George IV., and that therefore it was no great inconsistency to insult a Royal Duke who was also a Liberal, and the uncle of a Liberal monarch. The Royal Family, as we have seen, were not very popular with the Tories of that date. At the Queen’s marriage, only two Conservative peers were present: the Duke of Wellington and Lord Liverpool.*

As her Majesty was returning to Buckingham Palace, it was observed that the paleness and anxiety of the morning had given place to a bright flush, and a more unrestrained and joyous manner. After the wedding breakfast, the newly-married couple left for Windsor, on reaching which they found the whole town illuminated. A cordial reception from the residents, and from the Eton boys, sufficiently declared the sentiment of affectionate respect with which the Queen and Prince were regarded in the Royal Borough.

* Lord Malmesbury’s Memoirs of an Ex-Minister, Vol. I.



MARRIAGE OF QUEEN VICTORIA. (See p. 70.)

(After the Painting by Sir George Hayter, R.A.)

CHAPTER V.

THE FIRST YEAR OF MARRIED LIFE.

Difficulties of the Early Married Life of Prince Albert—His Unpopularity in Certain Quarters—Attempt to Suppress Duelling in the Army—Position of the Prince in the Royal Household—Want of Supervision in the Management of the Palace—Introduction of Reforms, on the Initiative of Prince Albert—Duties Assumed by the Prince—Domestic Life—Post Office Reform—Defective State of the Service Previous to 1840—Rowland Hill and the Penny Post—Opposition to the New Scheme—Introduction of the Lower Rate of Postage—General Features and Effects of the Change—Measure for the Protection of Children Employed in Chimney-sweeping—Attempt of Edward Oxford to Shoot the Queen—Appointment of Prince Albert as Regent under certain Eventualities—Life and Studies at Windsor—Birth of the Princess Royal—Devotion of the Prince to her Majesty—Christmas at Windsor (1840)—Christening of the Princess—Accident to Prince Albert—The Eastern Question: Turkey and Egypt—Removal of the Body of Napoleon I. from St. Helena to Paris—Rise and Development of the Agitation for Free Trade.

HAVING stayed three days at Windsor Castle, her Majesty and the Prince returned to Buckingham Palace. On the 28th of February the Duke of Coburg left for Germany, and his son had now to enter on the ordinary routine of life, such as life is in that exalted station. The position of the Prince was no doubt extremely difficult, and at first it appeared almost unbearably irksome. Nothing could surpass the mutual love and confidence of the newly-wedded pair, and, as regarded the great mass of the English people, the bridegroom was popular. But he was scanned with jealous dislike by a large section of the aristocracy; he had not the particular kind of disposition best fitted for overcoming that dislike; and some of the incidents which preceded his arrival in England were certainly of a nature to vex and discourage. On the whole, he bore his probation well; yet we now know that, in private, he used expressions of annoyance which showed how deeply he had been wounded. His letter to the Queen, complaining of the appointment of Mr. Anson as his Private Secretary, was rather querulous in tone, however just in argument. In another letter to her Majesty, written from Brussels on the 1st of February, 1840, he spoke of the vote on Colonel Sibthorp's amendment with respect to the annuity as "most unseemly"—which it clearly was not; and in May of the same year he wrote to his friend Prince Löwenstein that he was "only the husband, and not the master in the house." All these opposing facts and feelings boded evil for the future.

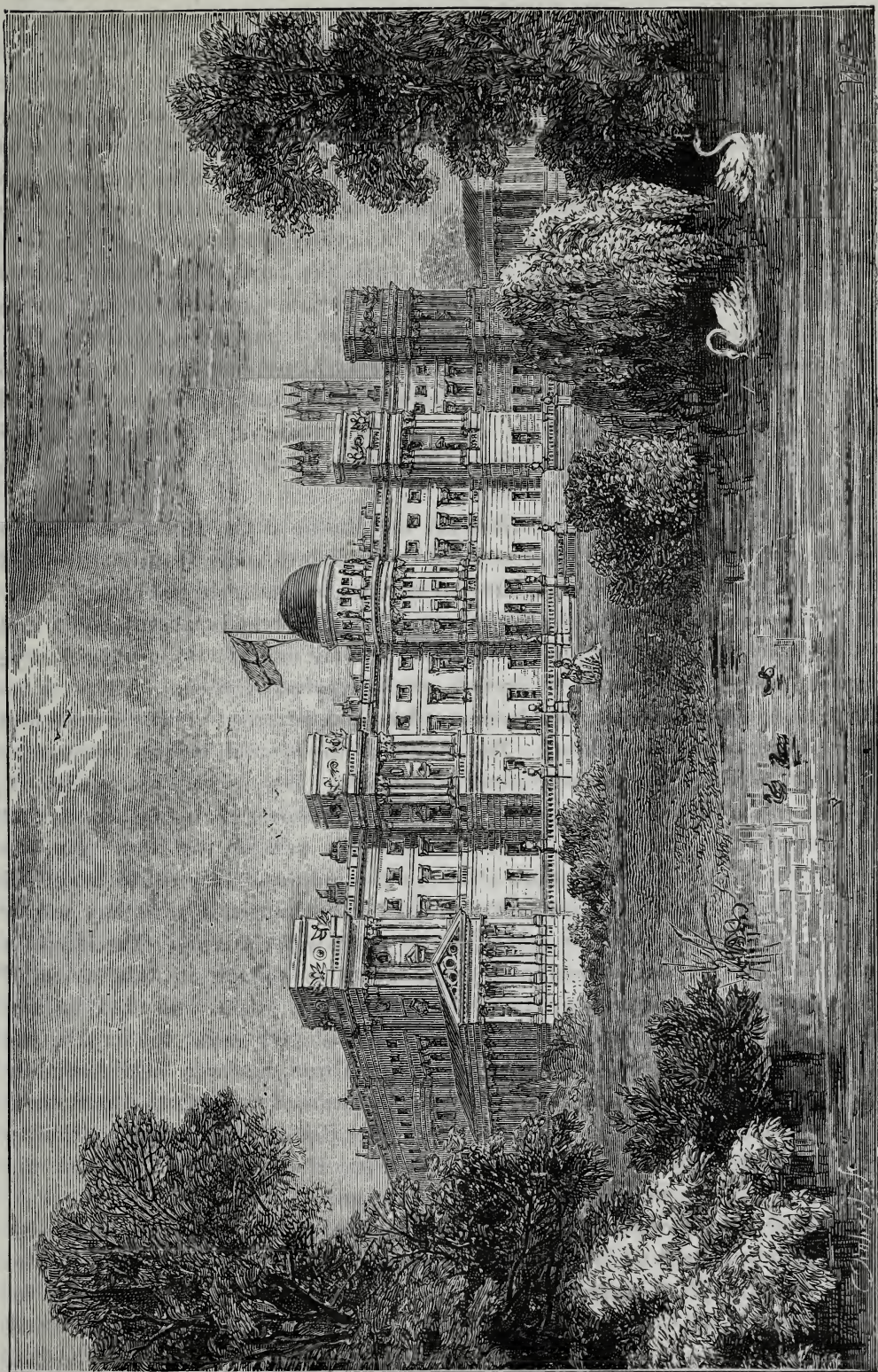
In some degree, the very virtues of Prince Albert's character stood in the way of his rapidly making friends, though a feeling of respect was not slow in arising. His manners were reserved and distant, and people mistook for haughtiness what was nothing more than the disinclination of a reflective and sequestered nature to enter heartily into the promiscuous and not always very sincere intercourse of what is called general society. He was considered cold and ungenial, and it is probable that to some he really was so. To those whom he truly loved, and whose natures were sympathetic with his own, he could be a

most delightful companion ; but this, of course, was no compensation to courtiers who expected to find in him a facile man of the world, but whose frivolities repelled and wearied him. In truth, he was something of a formalist, and formalism is the quality, of all others, which generally makes Englishmen feel most uneasy. One of his favourite ideas was to promote the abolition of duelling in the British army by the substitution of courts of arbitration on questions of personal honour. The Duke of Wellington and other leaders gave some heed to this proposal ; but it had no great prospect of success, and in time ceased to be talked about. Nevertheless, it must be allowed that the agitation of this subject by Prince Albert, in 1843, co-operated with other causes to put down the foolish and wicked practice against which his Royal Highness sought to make provision. When Queen Victoria ascended the throne, duelling was frequent. In twelve or thirteen years, it had almost entirely died out, killed by the ridicule and the awakened moral sense of all reasonable men.

The question of the Prince's position in the Royal Household was indisputably one of no little importance. The young husband possessed (as we find it stated by one well qualified to speak on the subject) "no independent authority by right of his position, and could exercise none, even within his own household, without trenching upon the privileges of others, who were not always disposed to admit of interference. This could scarcely fail to embarrass his position in the midst of a vast Royal establishment, which had inherited many of the abuses of former reigns, and where he found much of which he could not approve, but yet was without the power to rectify. And as behind every abuse there is always some one interested in maintaining it, he could not but be aware that he was regarded with no friendly eyes by those who were in that position, and who naturally dreaded the presence among them of one so visibly intolerant of worthlessness and incapacity." * The consequence was that the Prince sometimes found himself in collision with functionaries who would scarcely allow him any authority whatever, and especially with Madame Lehzen, then the Private Secretary of the Queen, who seems to have presumed too much on her Majesty's affection for her former governess. Confusion and extravagance, delay and discomfort, reigned within the Palace ; the Queen and the Prince were equally inconvenienced and annoyed ; yet, although some reforms were effected at an earlier period, it was not until 1844 that the system was radically altered.

There was in fact no master of the Royal dwelling, because there were too many masters. The control of affairs was divided by the Lord Steward, the Lord Chamberlain, and the Master of the Horse ; but no one of these was superior to the other two, and each acted in his department with entire independence. As their position was bound up with that of the Ministry, change was frequent, and an adverse vote in the House of Commons, on a question wholly political, would deprive the Queen of servants who were perhaps only just beginning to understand their work ; for the appointments were made solely on party grounds, and

* Sir Theodore Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort*, Vol. I.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE—GARDEN FRONT.

without any reference to fitness for the post. The apportionment of functions and responsibilities was often most bewildering in its nicety and complex elaboration; so that particular matters would be left without any supervision whatever, because it was impossible to determine whose business it was to look after them. Baron Stockmar, who, early in 1841, had drawn up a Memorandum on the subject at the request of the Queen and Prince Albert, wrote, with a certain sense of humour in the midst of his grave exposition, that the Lord Steward found the fuel and laid the fire, while the Lord Chamberlain lighted it; that, in the same manner, the Lord Chamberlain provided all the lamps, while it was the duty of the Lord Steward to clean, trim, and light them. The commonest repairs, such as are required in every house, could not be executed without the order passing through so many hands that months frequently elapsed before the desired result could be effected. The state of things, indeed, was such that Dickens's Circumlocution Office can hardly be regarded as an exaggeration.

"As neither the Lord Chamberlain nor the Master of the Horse," said Baron Stockmar, "has a regular deputy residing in the Palace, more than two-thirds of all the male and female servants are left without a master in the house. They can come and go off duty as they choose; they can remain absent hours and hours on their days of waiting, or they may commit any excess or irregularity; there is nobody to observe, to correct, or to reprimand them. There is no officer responsible for the cleanliness, order, and security of the rooms and offices throughout the Palace." The laxity of the system was so extreme as to be attended by certain very positive dangers. During the years 1840-41, a young chimney-sweep was more than once discovered hiding in one of the apartments. "The boy Jones" became the talk of the town; but the incident was decidedly unpleasant, although the lad does not seem to have had any evil intent. No such circumstance could have happened with any proper system of supervision; but of system there was positively none. Yet it was a matter of the utmost difficulty to bring about a change in this chaos of incompetence and corruption; and Sir Robert Peel, when consulted on the subject in 1841, deprecated any reform which should seem to impair the authority of the great officers of State. Prince Albert, however, held resolutely to his purpose, and, about the close of 1844, the heads of the several departments were induced to confer on the Master of the Household absolute authority over the whole internal economy of the Palace. From that time forward the Royal dwelling was managed with intelligence and economy.

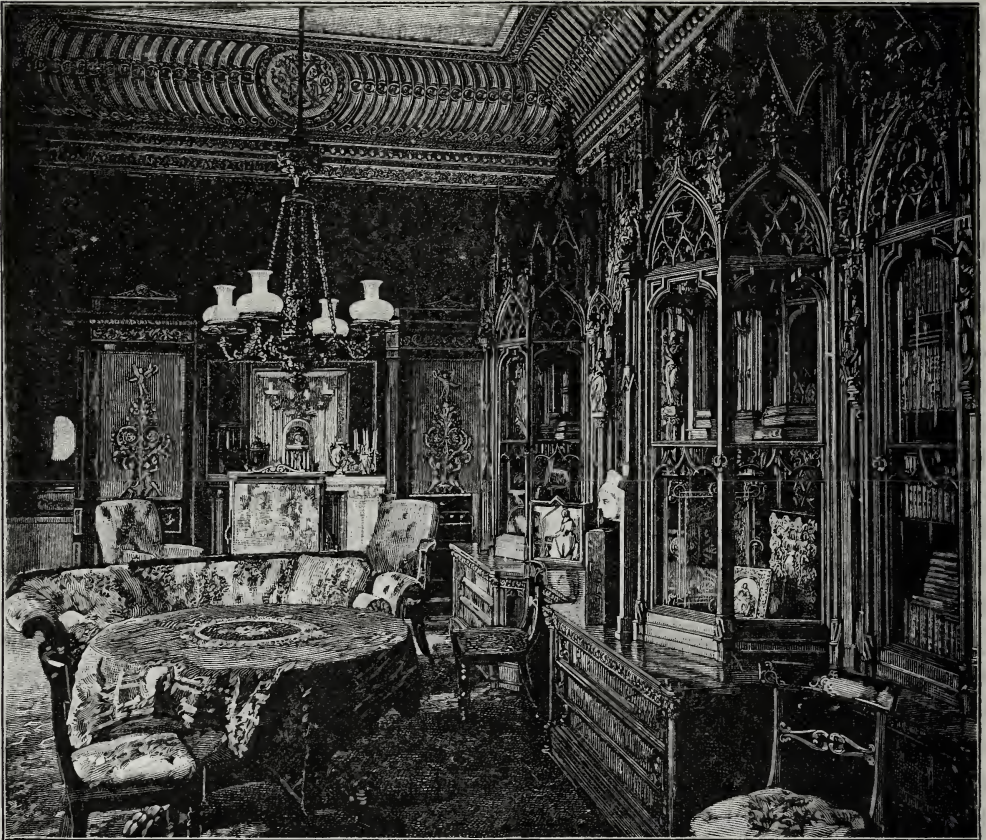
In relation to the State the position of the Prince was even more beset with thorns than in respect of his domestic arrangements. It was impossible that he should cut himself off from all interest in the great events of the time; yet he had no place in the Constitution, and it was most necessary that he should avoid even the semblance of interfering in the politics of the country on which he had been affiliated. His own idea was to constitute himself the Private Secretary

and confidential adviser of the Queen; and this was the position which, after a while, he actually filled. He read the foreign despatches which it is the duty of Government to submit to the sovereign before sending them out; he wrote notes for the guidance of her Majesty's judgment, and in many ways assisted the youth and inexperience of one who had been called, without much preparation, to the discharge of onerous duties. The suggestions of the Prince were not seldom accepted by Ministers; though of course it was necessary to regard them as coming from the Queen, as, indeed, by adoption they did. The domestic life of this period was cheered and exalted by reading, by music, by art, and by frequent visits to the theatre, especially to witness the plays of Shakespeare, then interpreted by a school of actors who in these days have scarcely any successors. Occasional visits to Claremont relieved the oppressive monotony of London existence.

A few weeks before the marriage of Prince Albert, a social and administrative reform had been begun in Great Britain, which must have possessed a very deep interest for his humane and liberal mind. For many years, the Postage system of the country had been in a state wholly inadequate to the requirements of modern civilisation. When a regular Post Office was established in the reign of Charles I. (all communication until then being occasional and precarious), the number of persons who could read and write was small, and the needs of the public were proportionably trivial. But in the middle of the nineteenth century it was imperative that the transmission of letters should be cheap, rapid, and facile. Facile and cheap it certainly was not, and before the full elaboration of the railway system there could be no rapidity in the modern sense of the term. Education was spreading; yet, to relatives and friends divided by a few miles, the expense of a letter was so great that, in many instances, people forbore from writing altogether, or resorted to a number of curious and dishonest tricks for sending and obtaining some sort of intelligence without paying for it. Within a small radius of Charing Cross, London, letters of moderate weight could be transmitted for twopence; but beyond these bounds the tariff was so high as to be prohibitory to all humble folk. The variations in the scale were determined not merely by distance, but also by the weight, and even the size of a letter. For transmission between London and Brighton the charge was eightpence, while nothing could be sent from London to Aberdeen under one shilling and threepence-halfpenny; and the letters so taxed were not to exceed a single sheet, or they paid extra. Peers, members of the House of Commons, and Cabinet Ministers, had the right of "franking," as the phrase was; that is, by writing their names on the outsides of letters, whether their own or those of other persons, they could secure their free conveyance. In the case of Ministers this privilege was without limits; in the other cases, the right was confined to a certain proportion of letters in the course of the year. The system of franking was bad in every way. It deprived the revenue of what was legitimately its due; it caused a large amount of petty vexation to the holders

of the privilege; it humiliated those who went begging for the favour; and it spared the very people who were best able to afford the expenses of the post.

No one requires to be told that, taking the whole mass of the population, there were but few persons sufficiently intimate with the great ones of the earth to obtain franks. The less fortunate were therefore driven to expedients of their own to evade a pressure which they were unable to bear. Illicit agencies for



PRINCE ALBERT'S MUSIC ROOM, BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

(From a Photograph by Mr. H. N. King.)

the transmission of letters at a cheaper rate were formed in various parts of the kingdom, and these were much employed by mercantile and manufacturing firms, who saved largely by the device. People lower in the scale exercised their wits in a number of contrivances, which were often extremely ingenious, and which it is impossible either to defend, or seriously to accuse. Newspapers were marked with strange dots and other understood symbols, which conveyed a few general facts from the sender to the recipient. Sometimes two or three words were written on one of the margins; but this was very likely to be detected. A much safer plan was to despatch a blank sheet of paper duly

directed, the mere sight of which would sufficiently assure B, who received, that A, who sent, was alive and well. The letter could then be at once returned to the postman, on the plea that the postage could not be afforded. An incident of this nature came under the observation of Coleridge when wandering about the



MR. (AFTERWARDS SIR) ROWLAND HILL.

Lake district in the days of his early manhood ; and there can be little doubt that the same thing was frequently done in many successive years. The evils of the Postal system were slightly mitigated by these stratagems, but only slightly ; and, as a rule, the poor were almost entirely deprived of the knowledge of one another, if fifty miles or so separated the brother from the sister, or the mother from the son.

Nevertheless, the revenue suffered from the several schemes for evading

the high rates of postage. Between 1815 and 1835 the population of Great Britain increased thirty per cent.; education had made some progress; and travelling was so much more common that the stage-coach duty (though the railway system had begun by the latter year) had increased one hundred and twenty-eight per cent. Yet during the same time the receipts of the Post Office underwent no augmentation whatever, if, indeed, they did not fall off. It is clear, therefore, that the secret and illicit post must have enjoyed a good deal of patronage, though rather in the middle than the lower class. The objections to the Postal system were many and glaring. It was needlessly onerous, the average charge on every letter throughout the United Kingdom being as much as sixpence-farthing; it encouraged fraud; it hindered the natural intercommunication of the poor; it was capricious and uncertain in its operation; and it included a great deal of most offensive spying, to ascertain whether suspected letters contained more than the regulation number of pages. Still, owing to the force of habit, it survived years of obloquy, until a genius arose capable of organising a better method.

Mr. Rowland Hill (subsequently Sir Rowland) was the third son of Mr. Thomas Wright Hill, of Kidderminster, and afterwards of Birmingham, and brother of Matthew Davenport Hill, an eminent lawyer, politician, and reformer, whose name is identified with the more humane treatment of juvenile offenders. Delicate in health from his childhood, young Rowland showed a premature genius for figures, and a still greater genius for organisation. In 1833, when about thirty-eight years of age, he was appointed Secretary to the South Australian Commission, and was largely instrumental in founding the colony of South Australia. It was about this time that his attention was first directed towards the Postal system, and early in 1837 he published a pamphlet on "Post Office Reform: its Importance and Practicability." He had observed that the number of letters passing through the post bore a ridiculously small proportion to the number of the population. His mathematical mind induced him to make calculations as to the cost of conveyance; and he found that the expense of transit on each individual letter between London and Edinburgh—a distance of four hundred miles—was not more than the thirty-sixth part of a penny. Indeed, the cost was but little enhanced by distance; and Mr. Hill therefore came to the conclusion that, if the rates of postage were reduced to the lowest, if the despatch of letters were made more frequent, and the speed of conveyance were increased, the revenue would gain instead of lose, to say nothing of the social boon.

Starting from his well-ascertained datum, that thirty-six letters could be carried from London to Edinburgh at a cost of a penny, Mr. Hill strongly urged the desirability of adopting a uniform rate of postage within the limits of the United Kingdom. That this rate should not be more than a penny, followed naturally from the proved facts of the case, and from the obvious justice of giving the public the advantage of a cheapness which would actually benefit instead of

injuring the revenue. Nevertheless, the opposition to be encountered proved very serious and harassing. All the persons engaged in the old system were pledged to resist the new; and it appears to have been really thought that a Penny Post would entail such difficulties in its organisation as to be practically impossible. The Postmaster-General, Lord Lichfield, declared in the House of Lords that the proposed scheme was the wildest and most extravagant he had ever known. In the opinion of this official, and of several others, the necessary expenses would be absolutely overwhelming, while, owing to the immeasurable increase of correspondence, no building would be large enough to receive the clerks and the letters. This very argument, however, clearly implied that there was a public want which the existing system did not supply. On the other hand, many believed that there would be very little increase in the number of letters, and that there was, in fact, no real demand for any change whatever.

Some persons, from whom a greater liberality might have been expected, were as antagonistic to the scheme as if they had been Post Office officials. The Rev. Sydney Smith, who had been a reformer in his earlier days, but who was now getting old, spoke of the plan as "nonsensical," and as needlessly entailing a loss of a million to the revenue. Rowland Hill, however, was not a man to be deterred by any amount of difficulty. He had convinced himself, and ultimately he convinced others, that letters might be sent to any part of Great Britain and Ireland for the sum of one penny, and that yet there would be a profit of two hundred per cent. The uniformity of charge would in itself save a large amount of time and trouble; and if the postage could be paid in advance, there would be a still further gain in general convenience. The idea of a penny letter-stamp was suggested to Mr. Hill by a proposal put forth some years before by Mr. Charles Knight, the eminent author and publisher, who thought that the best way of collecting a penny postage on newspapers would be by the use of stamped covers. This plan was ultimately adopted for letters, and people at the present day, if they think at all upon the subject, are astonished how their forefathers could have gone on from year to year without a method at once so cheap, so simple, and so admirably adapted to the necessities of the case.

As Mr. Hill was not himself a member of Parliament, it was essential to his scheme that he should get a spokesman or two in that Assembly. He was well served by Mr. Warburton and Mr. Wallace, who frequently brought the subject before the attention of the House of Commons. In February, 1838, Mr. Wallace moved for a select committee to investigate and report upon the proposed scheme of postal reform; but, as the Government declared that the matter was under their consideration, the motion was not carried. Public attention, however, was by this time strongly directed towards the subject, and numerous petitions were sent up to Parliament from very influential bodies, praying that the law might be altered. The Melbourne Ministry began to see that the subject was one which must shortly be taken in hand, whether in a greater or a less degree. The natura!

inclination was, of course, to treat it in the slightest degree possible, and various minor reforms were proposed, which only showed that the official position was getting insecure, but yet that there was a strong disinclination to sanction any radical change. At length, on the 5th of July, 1839, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in bringing forward the annual Budget at an unusually late period of the session, proposed a resolution declaring it to be expedient "to reduce the postage on letters to one uniform rate of one penny, charged upon every letter of a weight to be hereafter fixed by law; Parliamentary privileges of franking being abolished, and official franking strictly regulated; this House pledging itself at the same time to make good any deficiency of revenue which may be occasioned by such an alteration in the rates of the existing duties." The evidence obtained by a committee of the House had shown the absolute need and the entire practicability of Rowland Hill's plan. The demand for the adoption of that plan was now universal, and the Government could no longer resist a change which was supported by convincing reasons. The requisite Act of Parliament was rapidly passed, and the law received the Queen's sanction before the end of August.

Nevertheless, there was to be an intermediate period, during which the charge for postage would be at the rate of fourpence for each letter, half an ounce in weight, within the entire area of the United Kingdom. This was to save the Post Office from being deluged by a flood of penny letters, for which the officials would not be all at once prepared. But on the 10th of January, 1840, the postage was fixed at the uniform rate of one penny per letter not exceeding half an ounce in weight—a limit which in 1865 was widened to one ounce. Mulready, the painter, furnished a design for an official envelope, which, however, was found to be inconvenient, and was speedily laid aside. The affixed penny stamp was introduced on the 6th of May, and the system was then fairly launched—as fairly, that is, as official jealousy would suffer it to be. Franking was abolished with the introduction of the new method; and, although the Queen was still entitled to this privilege, she immediately relinquished it, with that good feeling which has always distinguished her Majesty's relations towards her people. The aristocracy, and others who had enjoyed the invidious right, found even the penny postage a serious addition to their expenses; but the merchant, the manufacturer, the tradesman, the middle classes generally, and the poor, were suddenly invested with a benefit of which they had long been unjustly deprived, and which proved of the highest value in all the ordinary transactions of life.

Another social reform in which her Majesty and Prince Albert must have taken the deepest interest was in some degree associated with the year 1840. On the 7th of August an Act of Parliament was passed with reference to the employment of children in the sweeping of chimneys. By the terms of this Act, it was made unlawful for master-sweeps to take apprentices under sixteen years of age, and no individual under twenty-one was to ascend a chimney after

July 1st, 1842. The law was made more stringent in 1864; but in the meanwhile it had done an immense amount of good. The barbarity of the system it supplanted was great indeed. Boys of tender years, whose ordinary treatment by their employers was of the roughest kind, were compelled, often by acts of extreme violence, to ascend chimneys for the purpose of brushing down the soot. Cases were known in which these poor little creatures were lost and stifled in the dark, cavernous, and winding passages which they had to thread. At the



RECEPTION OF THE QUEEN IN HYDE PARK AFTER THE NEWS OF OXFORD'S ATTEMPT ON HER LIFE.

best, the suffering was great, and entailed diseases of the joints, of the eyes, and of the respiratory organs. The system was wholly inexcusable, for the *ramoneur*, or jointed brush, now in general use, had been known for several years. It required an Act of Parliament, however, to enforce the introduction of this machine, and to protect the unfortunate children; though, in a very few years after the alteration, respectable householders wondered how they could have tolerated the abominable cruelty to which the climbing-boys were subjected.

Between the introduction of the new Postal system and the passing of the Bill for the protection of youthful sweeps, her Majesty had been exposed to a danger and an affront which she had probably never anticipated, though it has been

repeated several times since. On the 10th of June, 1840, the Queen was driving up Constitution Hill, in company with Prince Albert, when she was twice fired at by a pot-boy, seventeen years of age, named Edward Oxford. Her Majesty turned very pale, and, between the firing of the first and second shots, rose up in the carriage; but Prince Albert immediately pulled her down by his side. A pleasing impression was produced at the time by the thoughtfulness of the Queen in ordering the carriage to be at once driven to the residence of the Duchess of Kent, that her mother, who might have heard some rumour of the occurrence, should see that she was safe. On afterwards driving through Hyde Park, her Majesty had a most enthusiastic reception from the fashionable company in the Row. She was ultimately escorted home by a crowd consisting of all classes, and repeated shouts revealed the cordiality of the public feeling. On the offender being examined next day before the Privy Council, he said that, although there were many witnesses against him, they contradicted each other in several important particulars. It appeared that he belonged to a secret society called "Young England," the rules of which prescribed that every member should, when ordered to attend a meeting, be armed with a brace of loaded pistols and a sword, and should also be provided with a black crape cap, to cover the face. This society, however, does not seem to have had any wide ramifications, and was probably nothing more than an association of foolish young people, actuated as much by vanity as by malice. On the 10th of July, Oxford was tried for high treason in its most aggravated form, including an attempt on the very life of her Majesty. The defence was based on an allegation of insanity, though there can be little doubt that Oxford was not insane in any true sense of the word. He was ordered to be kept in a lunatic asylum during her Majesty's pleasure; but in 1868 he was set at liberty, on condition of going abroad. It is a discreditable fact that even members of Parliament applied for locks of his hair when it was cut off previous to his confinement. Many persons considered that he ought to have been hanged, and, when similar attempts were made some two years later, Oxford himself expressed an opinion that, had he been executed, there would have been no more shooting at the Queen. In this opinion he was probably right; but the extreme tenderness of the modern conscience forbade the execution of one whose criminal folly had, after all, effected no real mischief. After a while, Oxford seems to have recognised the wickedness of his act, which he attributed to inordinate vanity; and during his long confinement he learned the art of graining, and even taught himself some modern languages. His attempt, however, was a very grave evil, and, even supposing there had been no bullets in the pistols (as Oxford, perhaps truthfully, alleged), might have produced serious consequences. "My chief anxiety," wrote Prince Albert shortly afterwards, "was lest the fright should have been injurious to the Queen in her present state." One good effect was the increased popularity both of the Queen and of her husband, who were received with genuine enthusiasm whenever they appeared in public.

The condition of her Majesty in the summer of 1840 rendered it advisable that a Regency should be appointed, in case of her approaching confinement terminating in a manner which all would have deplored. The Queen's own wish was that Prince Albert should be named as Regent; but of course it was necessary to carry a Bill to this effect through Parliament, and it was feared that, as in the case of the Naturalisation Bill and the measure for granting an annuity, there might be some difficulties of a vexatious nature, unless an understanding could be previously arrived at with the leaders of the Opposition. The Duke of Sussex was known to dislike conferring this position on Prince Albert, and to favour the idea of creating a Council of Regency, in which he himself would be a prominent member. Baron Stockmar, therefore, opened communications with Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington, and the matter was speedily arranged. A Bill appointing Prince Albert to the office of Regent in the case supposed was introduced into the Upper House on the 13th of July, and passed with no other dissentient voice than that of the Duke of Sussex. The measure was equally successful in the House of Commons, and it was generally agreed that the father, as the natural guardian of any offspring, was the fittest person to exercise supreme power in the name of the Royal infant, until he or she had attained the legal majority. On the other hand, there was the objection that the actual ruler of the country during many years would be a born foreigner; but, as this had happened several times before in the history of England, it was held to be no serious obstacle to an arrangement otherwise satisfactory.

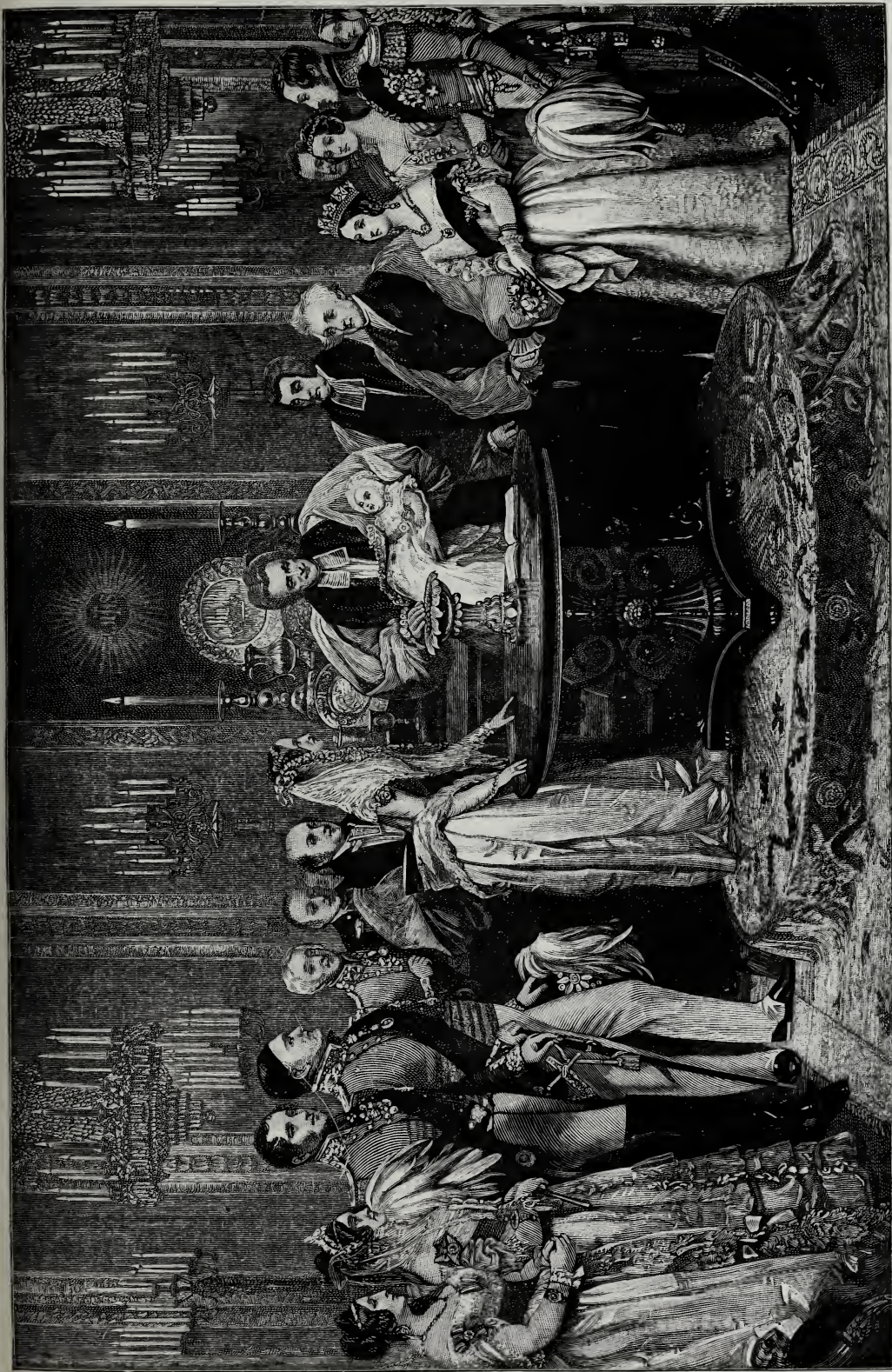
On the 11th of September, Prince Albert was made a member of the Privy Council, and, having been recently appointed to the Coloneley of the 11th Hussars, he went out from time to time with a squadron of the 1st Life Guards in Windsor Park, in order to make himself acquainted with the forms of English drill, and the words of command. During the same autumn months, he was much occupied with a series of readings on the laws and Constitution of England, under the care of Mr. Selwyn, a distinguished writer on jurisprudence. He and the Queen were then residing at Windsor, the green and woody surroundings of which were an endless source of delight to the Prince. But an event was now approaching which rendered a return to Buckingham Palace advisable. The London residence of her Majesty was re-entered on the 13th of November, and, during the same month, Baron Stockmar, who had left England for his home in Coburg at the beginning of August, returned to London at the urgent solicitation of the Prince, who desired to have that admirable friend and counsellor at hand during a period of natural anxiety. On the 21st of November, 1840, the Princess Royal was born, and, although the Prince was a little disappointed at the infant not being a son, the feeling was but momentary. His devotion to the Queen during her confinement was constant, and beyond all praise. He generally dined with the Duchess of Kent, refused to go out in the evening, and was always at hand if anything were required. "No one but himself," says a memorandum by her Majesty in an official work on the Prince's early life, "ever lifted her from

her bed to her sofa, and he always helped to wheel her on her bed or sofa into the next room. For this purpose he would come instantly when sent for from any part of the house. As years went on, and he became overwhelmed with work (for his attentions were the same in all the Queen's subsequent confinements), this was often done at much inconvenience to himself; but he ever came with a sweet smile on his face. In short, his care of her was like that of a mother; nor could there be a kinder, wiser, or more judicious nurse."* Her Majesty recovered so rapidly that the Court removed to Windsor Castle for the Christmas holidays. The Prince was always much interested in the ceremonies of that season, and it was now that the pretty German custom of setting up Christmas-trees, as a graceful means of distributing little presents both to old and young, was introduced into England. The Court returned to Buckingham Palace on the 23rd of January, 1841, and Parliament was opened by the Queen in person on the 26th. Her Majesty had but recently told the Prince that in former days she was only too happy to be in London, and felt wretched at leaving it; but that since the hour of their marriage she was unhappy at leaving the country, and could be content never to go to town. This pleased him, as showing an increasing solidity of mind, which found greater pleasure in the quiet yet joyous delights of the country than in the giddy amusements of the metropolis.

The baptism of the Princess Royal took place on the 10th of February, the first anniversary of the Queen's marriage, when the infant was christened Victoria Adelaide Mary Louisa. The Prince, in writing, on the 12th of February, 1841, to his grandmother, the Dowager Duchess of Gotha, said that the christening had gone off very well. "Your little great-grandchild," he added, "behaved with great propriety, and like a Christian. She was awake, but did not cry at all, and seemed to crow with immense satisfaction at the lights and brilliant uniforms, for she is very intelligent and observing. The ceremony took place at half-past six P.M.; and after it there was a dinner, and then we had some instrumental music. The health of the little one was drunk with great enthusiasm." The sponsors at the christening were the Duke of Saxe Coburg and Gotha (represented in his absence by the Duke of Wellington), the King of the Belgians, the Queen Dowager, the Duchess of Gloucester, the Duchess of Kent, and the Duke of Sussex. Only the day before, the Prince had met with an accident, which might have proved fatal. He was skating on the ornamental water in Buckingham Palace Gardens, when a piece of ice, which had been recently broken, and had thinly frozen over again, gave way as he was passing across it. He had to swim for two or three minutes, in order to get out; but her Majesty, who was standing on the bank, showed great presence of mind, and afforded valuable assistance.

During the last two years, the Queen had been rendered anxious by

* The Early Days of his Royal Highness the Prince Consort; compiled, under the direction of her Majesty, by Lieut.-General the Hon. C. Grey. 1867.



CHRISTENING OF THE PRINCESS ROYAL. (After the Painting by C. R. Leslie, R.A.)

complications in the East, which at one time threatened to involve us in a war with France. The Pasha of Egypt, Mehemet Ali, had for some years made himself almost independent of the Turkish Sultan, Mahmoud II., and had annexed the whole of Syria to his recognised dominions. He had an able, energetic, and martial son (or rather an adopted son) named Ibrahim Pasha, who repeatedly worsted the Ottoman forces, overran the larger part of the Turkish dominions in Asia, and even threatened Constantinople itself. After a while, a compromise was effected, by which the Egyptians withdrew from their more advanced positions, but were suffered to retain the province of Syria. This arrangement was concluded in 1833; but, six years later, Mehemet Ali again rose against his suzerain. Mahmoud II. expired on the 1st of July, 1839, shortly after a great battle in Syria, which had ended in the discomfiture of his army, but of which he had not received intelligence at the time of his decease. A few days later, the Capitan Pasha, or Lord High Admiral, Achmet, deserted to Mehemet Ali with the whole of the Turkish fleet, and the Ottoman Empire might have been rent into fragments, had it not been for the interposition of England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, which, in July, 1840, gave Mehemet Ali to understand that he would not be permitted to proceed in his career of rebellion and conquest. Thus assisted, the young Turkish Sultan, Abdul-Medjid, pronounced the deposition of his Egyptian vassal. Beyrout was bombarded by a combined English, Austrian, and Turkish fleet, and captured in October. Other successes followed, and old Mehemet Ali made his submission to superior power. He was deprived of all his conquests, but permitted to retain Egypt; and thus a very difficult state of affairs was brought to a peaceful conclusion about the close of 1840. There had been no little danger of a rupture with France, owing to the very different views of the Eastern Question taken by that Power and by England. France dreaded the establishment of British influence in Egypt, where she desired to affirm her own superiority; and in the spring of 1840 M. Guizot was sent on a special mission to London, in the hope of composing matters. The Queen received him graciously; yet he has left an account of a dinner at Buckingham Palace, which confirms other descriptions as to the dulness and languor of those entertainments. His negotiations did not proceed very happily; but at length the clouds passed off, and, shortly after the birth of the Princess Royal, all menace of a European war had entirely disappeared.

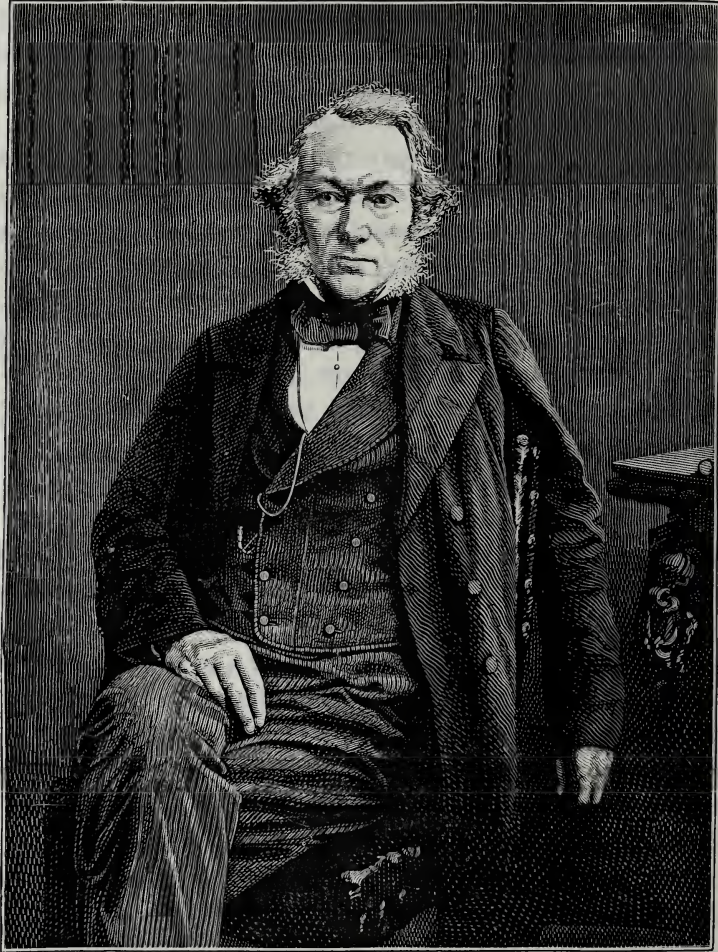
A minor but still important incident, belonging to the same period, tended to the creation of a better feeling between England and France, and, in a not distant future, helped forward a striking change in the political condition of the latter country. In May, 1840, during the reign of Louis Philippe, the body of Napoleon I. was removed, by permission of the English Government, from the island of St. Helena to the dominions where the great conqueror had once held such brilliant, yet disastrous, sway. On the 15th of December, the remains were buried with solemn pomp in the Hôtel des Invalides, in Paris. A magnificent monument has since been erected over the grave, and it cannot be

doubted that the enthusiasm awakened by the reception of the mighty soldier's ashes had much to do with the subsequent revival of the Napoleonic Empire.

A question of great importance, which had been growing up for years, was now acquiring a degree of prominence which renders it advisable that some notice should be taken of its rise and development. The Corn Laws of England had long operated not only as a serious interference with the trade of the country, but as an artificial aggravation of the price of food. From time to time, various attempts had been made to lighten the burden by making the tax dependent on the price of native wheat; but the injury to the populace was always considerable, and the benefit, if there was any benefit at all, was enjoyed simply by the landowners and the agricultural class. Strange to say, the great body of the people, who were chiefly interested in the matter, made little remonstrance during a long term of years, and it required the persistent efforts of an organised body to excite the necessary amount of opposition to an impost which did cruel injustice to the multitude. An association for obtaining the repeal of the Corn Laws was established in London in 1834, and other bodies, animated by the same intention, arose in different parts of the country. Still, their influence was but slight; and it was not until the work was taken up by men peculiarly fitted to carry on the discussion, that the country recognised the evils of a system which made the poor man's loaf dearer than it ought to be.

In 1804, a small landed proprietor near Midhurst, in Sussex, had a son born to him, who was afterwards the celebrated Richard Cobden. The boy was soon introduced to business life in London, and subsequently became a partner in a Manchester printed-cotton factory, for which he occasionally travelled. In this way he saw a good deal of the world, and, being a person of a singularly shrewd, penetrating, and reflective mind, he discerned the whole fallacy of the Protective system, and determined to devote his energies to a repeal of the Corn Laws. In 1838, he and some others brought the matter before the attention of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, and from that time forward the question came into the first rank of public discussion. The following year, delegates were sent from the manufacturing districts to London, that their views upon the subject might be brought under the notice of the Legislature. At that time, Cobden had no seat in the House of Commons; but the desired reform was ably supported in that assembly by the brother of the late Earl of Clarendon, Mr. Charles Villiers, who, so far as Parliament is concerned, may be described as the Father of Free Trade. On the 19th of February, 1839, Mr. Villiers moved that the House resolve itself into a Committee of Inquiry on the Corn Laws; and on the 12th of March he moved that certain manufacturers be heard by counsel at the bar of the House against the Corn Laws, as injurious to their private interests. Both motions were rejected by large majorities, and the delegates returned to the North, convinced that nothing would serve their cause but a systematic campaign, directed against the evils from which they suffered, together with the great majority of the people.

Hence the creation of the Anti-Corn-Law League, the constitution of which was adopted on the 20th of March, 1839, at a meeting in Manchester. The body thus formed was a sort of federation of all similar bodies existing in different parts of the kingdom. It was agreed that delegates from the different local associations should from time to time meet for business at the principal towns



RICHARD COBDEN.

(From a Photograph by Messrs. W. and D. Downey.)

represented, and that, with a view to securing unity of action, the central office of the League should be established in Manchester; to which office should be entrusted, among other duties, those of engaging and recommending competent lecturers, and of obtaining the co-operation of the public press. The two chief leaders of the movement thus set on foot were Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright; but there were several others who lent valuable assistance to the cause. In particular, Captain (afterwards General) Perronet Thompson, a man of great literary power, published (originally in 1827, and again in later years) a "Catechism of

the Corn Laws," which placed the whole argument in a singularly lucid and compact form before the nation. Numerous tracts, written with similar objects, were printed in enormous numbers, and dispersed all over the country. Meetings were held in important towns, and lectures were delivered by a staff of paid assistants, of whom one of the principal was the late W. J. Fox, afterwards Member for Oldham—a journalist of distinction, a ready and effective disputant, and a speaker gifted with remarkable powers of persuasive eloquence. By the early part of 1841, the public mind had been to a considerable extent permeated by the ideas favoured by the League ; but a great deal still remained to be done before either party in the State could be convinced that the only proper course was to abolish the impost upon corn, and give the British people the benefit of foreign produce in those years of scarcity to which their variable climate so frequently condemns them. The sincerity with which capitalists in the commercial parts of England adopted Free Trade views was strikingly shown by the large sums of money subscribed every year for the maintenance of the League, and for the diffusion of its economic principles. It is true that the manufacturers had an interest in removing all restrictions upon trade, which at that time were numerous, and operated to the general disadvantage of commerce. But in their resistance to injurious enactments they were fighting the battle of the people themselves, and the reforms which began a few years later enhanced the prosperity of England, and materially lessened the menaces of discontent.

CHAPTER VI.

TROUBLES IN THE STATE, AND HAPPINESS AT HOME.

Growing Unpopularity of the Melbourne Administration—The Stockdale Case—Approaching Fall of the Government—Financial Embarrassments—Lord John Russell's Proposal with Respect to the Corn Laws—Defeat of the Ministry—General Election, and Conservative Majority—Views of Prince Albert—Settlement of the "Bedchamber" Question—Wise Counsel of the Prince and Baron Stockmar—Visits of the Queen to Places of Interest—Troublesome Loyalty—Launch of the *Trafalgar*—The Melbourne Government and Free Trade—Speech from the Throne on the Meeting of the New Parliament—Vote of Want of Confidence in the Government—Resignation of Ministers—Final Years of Lord Melbourne—Formation and Chief Objects of Sir Robert Peel's Administration—The High Church Movement in England—Disruption of the Church of Scotland—Lord Melbourne's Opinion of Prince Albert—Sir Robert Peel and the Prince—Public Appearances of the Latter in Connection with Social and Artistic Questions—Birth and Christening of the Prince of Wales—Meeting of Parliament for the Session of 1842—Splendid Festivities at Court—Attempts of Francis and Bean to Shoot her Majesty.

As the year 1841 advanced, the Melbourne Ministry, which had never occupied a strong position since the General Election of 1837, grew weaker and weaker. In many respects, the Government was a good one. It carried through some excellent reforms, and was for the most part animated by a liberal and benevolent

spirit. Yet its administrative powers were faulty; it was repeatedly falling into awkward blunders; it was afflicted with continual deficits; it was unpopular, and it contrived to draw the Queen herself into the orbit of its own disfavour. Education was advanced, though in a very hesitating and tentative fashion; colonisation was promoted; some of the most elementary rights of married women were recognised by statute; the poor climbing-boys, as we have seen, were protected from the cruelty of being compelled to ascend chimneys; the Postal system was reformed; many other things were at least attempted. But people could not forget the mistakes and shortcomings of the Ministry, nor regard with enthusiasm a body of statesmen who often moved with reluctance, and sometimes moved not at all; who had a certain facility in offending others, and yet depended for their official existence on the precarious support of their opponents. As if to make matters worse, they got into a controversy with the law-courts, in consequence of an action brought by a publisher named Stockdale against the Messrs. Hansard, printers to the House of Commons, for issuing, in 1836, certain Reports on Prisons, one of which contained serious reflections on the plaintiff. The Court of Queen's Bench gave judgment in favour of Stockdale; the Government and the House of Commons championed the printers; a good deal of unseemly action and counteraction took place; and at length, in the spring of 1840, the matter was settled by a Bill affording summary protection to all persons employed in the publication of Parliamentary papers. In their main contention, Ministers were probably right; but they conducted the dispute in a rather undignified manner, and the feeling of the public generally was very much against them.

The successes of the British fleet in the East, during the autumn of 1840, did little to restore the credit of the Melbourne Administration. In 1841, everything prefigured an approaching change; yet the Government clung to office with the utmost tenacity. Parliament was opened by the Queen in person on the 26th of January; and in a little while the Budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Baring, disclosed a deficit of nearly two millions. It was thought to fill the gap by alterations in the timber and sugar duties (from which Mr. Baring hoped to obtain an increase of £1,300,000), and by whatever might accrue from Lord John Russell's contemplated modification of the Corn Laws. The House of Commons, however, rejected the proposals of the Finance Minister by a majority of 36 in a House of 598 members. Most people thought that after this the Government must needs resign. But, Lord John Russell having already given notice of his intention to move for a committee of the whole House, to consider the state of legislation with regard to the trade in corn, it was determined to try this last chance. The plan was to propose a fixed duty of eight shillings a quarter on wheat, and at the same time to diminish the rates on rye, barley, and oats. But the patience of the Opposition was now worn out. On the 24th of May, Sir Robert Peel gave notice of a motion to the effect that the Government had lost the confidence of the House of Commons, and that their

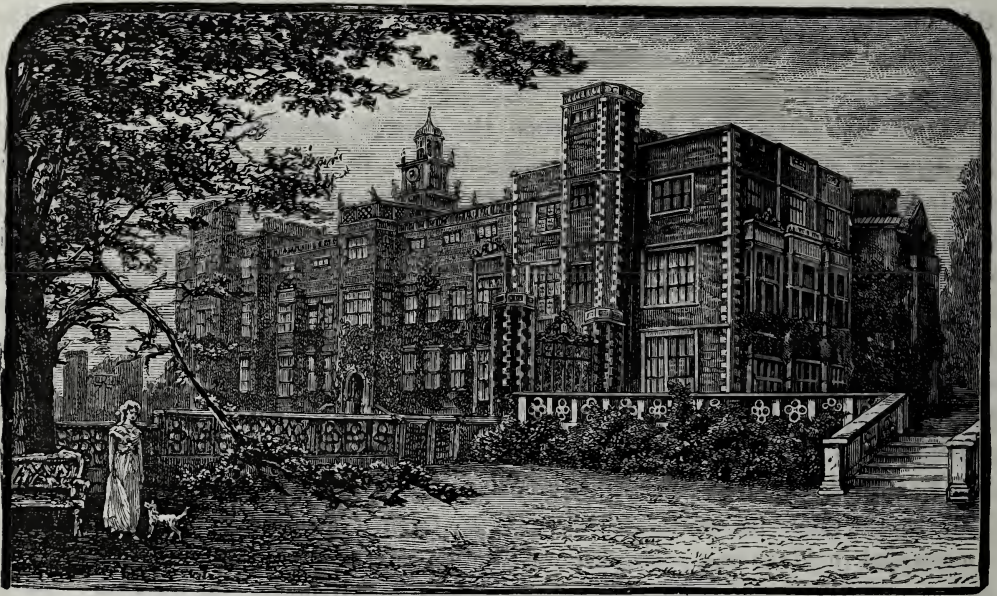
continuance in office under such circumstances was at variance with the spirit of the Constitution. This was brought forward on the 27th of the same month; and the debates, after lasting several nights, came to a conclusion on the 4th of June, when 312 voted in favour of the motion, and 311 against. Government was thus left in a minority of one, and Lord John Russell promised to state, at the next meeting of Parliament, what course her Majesty's Ministers were prepared to adopt. In the meanwhile, he intimated the withdrawal of his motion on the subject of the Corn Laws. On the 7th of June, he announced the intention of the Ministry to advise the dissolution of Parliament. The General Election took place during the summer, and the Conservatives obtained a large majority.

Lord Melbourne had long foreseen the ruin of the Ministry, and probably he secretly rejoiced at his approaching release from a task which had manifestly become hopeless. Before Baron Stockmar again left England, in the early part of 1841, the Premier told that distinguished German that his Cabinet was exposed to all sorts of dangers, and that he saw no guarantee for its stability. He conversed much with Prince Albert, and was most anxious that the Queen should communicate to his Royal Highness everything connected with public affairs. Writing to his father, in April, 1841, the Prince observes:—"I study the politics of the day with great industry. I speak quite openly with the Ministers on all subjects, so as to gain information, and I endeavour quietly to be of as much use to Victoria in her position as I can." He saw that Sir Robert Peel would soon be again called upon to form a Ministry; he knew that an unpleasant incident had occurred on a similar occasion in 1839; and he felt that the recurrence of any such catastrophe should by all means be avoided. There must be no second collision between the sovereign and a leading statesman on a matter so unimportant from one point of view, yet so important from another, as the position of a few Bedchamber women. Prince Albert therefore brought the subject under the notice of Lord Melbourne, and remarked that he was naturally in a state of some uneasiness at the probable course of events; that his sole anxiety was that the Queen should act constitutionally, and with more general applause than on the previous occasion; that it was his duty, and Lord Melbourne's also, to prepare her Majesty for possible eventualities; and that an agreement ought to be arrived at, as to what she should do under the circumstances.* The Prime Minister assented to these views, and it was settled that, should there be a change of Ministry, the Queen would arrange that those of her ladies should retire of their own accord whose removal might be requested by the in-coming Cabinet, on account of their relationship to leaders of the Whig party. It was the view of Prince Albert, and also of Lord Melbourne, that Sir Robert Peel should be previously consulted. Negotiations were accordingly opened with that statesman, through the medium of the Prince's secretary,

* Letter to Baron Stockmar, May, 1841.

Mr. Anson ; and when Sir Robert accepted office soon afterwards, the Duchesses of Bedford and Sutherland, and Lady Normanby, relinquished their posts.*

The time was one of great trial for the Queen ; but she had now always at her side an adviser of much discrimination, of excellent sense, and of the highest honour. "Albert," wrote her Majesty, about this period, to her uncle, the King of the Belgians, "is indeed a great comfort to me. He takes the greatest, possible interest in what goes on, feeling with me and for me, and yet abstaining



HATFIELD HOUSE.

as he ought, from biassing me either way, though we talk much on the subject, and his judgment is, as you say, good and calm." The Prince, in his turn, had an invaluable guide in Baron Stockmar, who frequently corresponded with him. In a letter written from Coburg on the 18th of May, 1841, the Baron says:—"If things come to a change of Ministry, then the great axiom, irrefragably one and the same for all Ministries, is this, namely, the Crown supports frankly, honourably, and with all its might, the Ministry of the time, whatever it be, so long as it commands a majority, and governs with integrity for the welfare and advancement of the country. A king who, as a Constitutional king, either cannot or will not carry this maxim into practice, deliberately descends from the lofty pedestal on which the Constitution has placed him to the lower one of a mere party chief. Be you, therefore, the Constitutional genius of the Queen. Do not content yourself with merely whispering this maxim in her ear when circumstances serve, but strive also to carry it out into practice, at the right time, and by the worthiest means."

* Sir Theodore Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort*.



THE QUEEN AT THE LAUNCH OF THE "TRAFALGAR."

While awaiting the political crisis which every one saw could not be long in coming, the Queen and Prince Albert made several interesting excursions to various places in the country, such as Nuneham, Oxford, Woburn Abbey, Pan-shanger, Brocket Hall (the seat of Lord Melbourne), and Hatfield. On these occasions, the Royal party were very well received by the country people, though the Queen, in her "Journal," rather complains of the crowding and pressing, and of the dust raised by the mounted farmers who, in their well-meant but somewhat inconvenient loyalty, furnished supplementary escorts. Englishmen, of course, are not to expect the privileges of a more favoured race, and southern roads are naturally more dusty than northern moorlands. But her Majesty was not much offended, and speaks of the people as "good" and "loyal," though, it would seem, a little troublesome. Among the places visited was the seat of the Duke of Devonshire at Chiswick; and on the 21st of June the Queen and Prince Albert went to see the *Trafalgar* launched at Woolwich. At the request of her Majesty, the vessel was named by Lady Bridport, a niece of Lord Nelson, and the wine used was a portion of that taken from the great Admiral's flag-ship, *Victory*, after the battle of Trafalgar. Out of the five hundred people on board at the time of the launch, no fewer than one hundred had taken part in the ever-memorable action, and the scene altogether was of the most impressive kind. In a letter to his father, written on the following day, Prince Albert said that this was the most imposing sight he could remember. There were about five hundred thousand people present, the Thames being covered for miles with ships, steamers, barges, and boats.

The Melbourne Ministry, while struggling for existence to the very last, had contrived to offend both parties in the State by its half-heartedness. The lowering of the duties on cereals was to some extent a concession to the Free Trade party; but it did not go far enough to satisfy them, while at the same time it alarmed the agricultural interest. On the whole, it appeared as if the Government were gradually abandoning the Protective system, although, no farther back than 1839, Lord Melbourne had declared in the House of Lords that "the repeal of the Corn Laws would be the most insane proposition that ever entered the human head." Even Lord John Russell, who was much more a reformer than his chief, had very recently spoken of Free Trade in anything but respectful terms. Indeed, the Ministerial Whigs generally were disinclined to adopt the opinions of Mr. Villiers and Mr. Cobden; yet, in the early summer of 1841, they showed a remarkable tendency to advance in that direction. In the debate on the Sugar Duties, Lord Palmerston, referring to what were now considered the necessary measures for relieving British trade from the encumbrances which had hampered it, observed, in a spirit of political prophecy:—"I will venture to predict that, although our opponents may resist those measures to-night, for the sake of obtaining a majority in the division, yet, if they should come into office, those are the measures which a just regard for the finances and commerce of the country will compel them to propose." All this was a movement

in the right direction; yet people would not believe in its sincerity. They said it was only a trick to obtain votes, and to stave off a little while longer the inevitable downfall. Probably they were right. At any rate, their views prevailed at the General Election.

On the 15th of July, about the close of the Elections, Lord Melbourne reported to the Queen that the Conservatives would have a majority of seventy. In point of fact, it amounted to seventy-six, and even Lord John Russell preserved his seat for the City of London by so bare a success that, of the four members, he obtained the smallest number of votes, and narrowly escaped defeat. On the meeting of the new Parliament, which was on the 24th of August, the Royal Speech (read by Commission) contained the following significant passage:—"Her Majesty is desirous that you should consider the laws which regulate the trade in corn. It will be for you to determine whether these laws do not aggravate the natural fluctuation of supply; whether they do not embarrass trade, derange the currency, and, by their operation, diminish the comfort and increase the privation of the great body of the community." Amendments to the Address, however, were carried in both Houses by large majorities. These amendments pointed to the continued excess of expenditure over income, and declared that nothing could be done while the Government did not possess the confidence of the House or of the country. The adoption of the amendments could, of course, produce only one result. Everybody knew that the fate of the Melbourne Administration would be sealed as soon as Parliament met, and, now that an adverse vote had been carried, nothing remained but to resign. In her reply to the Address, the Queen expressed satisfaction at the spirit in which Parliament proposed to deliberate on the matters she had recommended to them, and said in conclusion:—"Ever anxious to listen to the advice of my Parliament, I will take immediate measures for the formation of a new Administration." On the night of the day when this message was sent to Parliament, the resignation of Ministers was announced to both Houses. Three days later—namely, on the 2nd of September—the Queen spent her last evening with the ladies of the Household who, by a political necessity, were now forced to retire. The dinner was a sad and silent one, and it is reported that tears were shed. Her Majesty had contracted a sincere friendship for these ladies; through all the years of her reign she had leant for support on the Ministers to whom they were related; and it was natural, even commendable, that deep regret should be both felt and shown. On the other hand, it was impossible for Sir Robert Peel to carry on his Government with such an adverse influence at head-quarters; and personal considerations were forced to give way before others of greater importance.

After his resignation of office in the late summer of 1841, Lord Melbourne disappears almost entirely from the history and politics of England. He had always been a somewhat indolent man, or at any rate a man with no devouring passion for work, no insatiable ambition of towering above his fellow-men.

Moreover, he was now getting elderly, and there had been much in the last few years to make him weary of political distinction. Having ceased to be a Minister of the Crown, he turned his position as a member of the House of Lords to but little account. Casting the load of politics from his shoulders, for which, in



SIR ROBERT PEEL.

spite of his long official experience, he seems never to have had any warm regard, he passed the remainder of his days as a sort of recluse, fond of literature, and disposed to fleet away the time in studies which were elegant rather than profound. He had long been a widower; his only child, a son, had some years before died unmarried at the early age of twenty-nine; and the broken statesman had now few companions of a very intimate character. Whether his latter years were as lonely as some have represented, may be doubtful; but it is too likely that they were not cheered by the highest or the best kind of social intercourse. He died on the 24th of November, 1848, a little under seventy years of age;

and the title soon afterwards became extinct. Whatever his faults, it is generally acknowledged that Lord Melbourne had many amiable qualities. But his position in the history of England, though in some respects interesting, can never be regarded as illustrious.

In the new Administration, Sir Robert Peel was First Lord of the Treasury, Lord Lyndhurst Lord High Chancellor, Sir James Graham Home Secretary, Mr. Goulburn Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Earl of Aberdeen Foreign Secretary, Lord Stanley Secretary for the Colonies, Sir Henry Hardinge Secre-



MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD, FROM THE CHERWELL.

tary at War, Lord Ellenborough President of the Board of Control, and the Duke of Wellington leader of the House of Lords, without office. These were the principal appointments, and they constituted a Government of considerable ability. The chief strength of the new Cabinet, however, lay in Sir Robert Peel himself. During his former short-lived Government, in 1834-5, he had combined the functions of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was hoped that this arrangement would now be repeated; but the inferior office, as we have seen, was conferred on Mr. Goulburn. Still, it was well known that Peel would be the directing financial genius of the Administration. His abilities as a financier were generally admitted, and have probably never been surpassed. If the country was to be dragged out of the abyss of its ever-increasing embarrassments, Peel was the man most likely to perform the

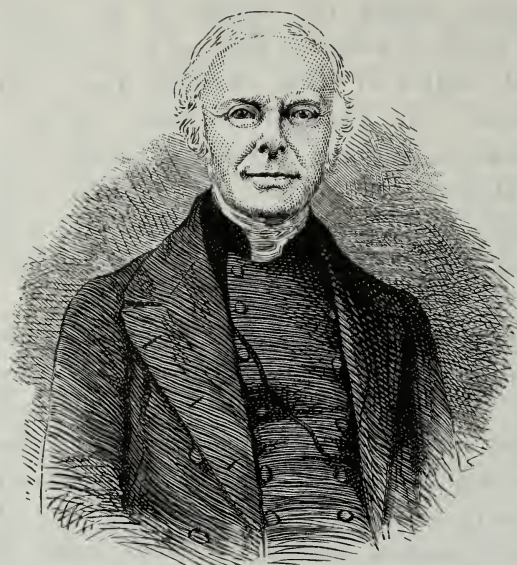
feat. But the deficit was alarming, and, shortly after the reassembling of Parliament, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said he must ask for a vote of £2,500,000, adding that he would in time state how he proposed to meet the existing deficiency. In the meanwhile, the distress of the working classes was becoming every day more intense, and in the manufacturing districts great dissatisfaction was expressed that Sir Robert Peel not only refused to adopt Free Trade in its integrity, but even repudiated Lord John Russell's project for a small fixed duty upon corn. Peel favoured what was known in those days as the Sliding Scale, by which foreign wheat was allowed to be imported at a variable duty,—greater when the price of home-grown wheat was low, and lower when the price was high. The truth is that neither the Whigs nor the Tories had made up their minds to accept the principles of Free Trade, while both sought to postpone the threatened day by contrivances more or less objectionable, and more or less futile. But the General Election had returned to Parliament a man who in the course of a few years was to carry the Free Trade banner triumphantly on to the Treasury benches themselves. Richard Cobden now sat for the first time in Parliament, and his "unadorned eloquence," as Peel afterwards called it, was soon to produce an immense effect upon the minds of those who heard him.

Among the many sources of agitation existing at that time, none was more remarkable, or in some respects more important, than the High Church movement, which had originated several years before, but which in 1841 was beginning to assume grave proportions. This turmoil of the religious mind had first shown itself in the University of Oxford towards the latter end of the reign of George IV. A number of enthusiastic young students—men of great mental power, and of unquestionable sincerity—began to be dissatisfied with the position, doctrine, and ceremonial of the Church for which they were being prepared, or which they had already entered. They considered that that Church had abnegated some of its most valuable functions; that it was lax in its ideas, somnolent in its teaching, forgetful of tradition, slovenly in its ritual, and indifferent to its authoritative powers. There had in truth been a good deal of dull and formal worldly-mindedness amongst the clergy for the last hundred years; but it must not be forgotten that this period of repose had had inestimable advantages in the softening of dogma, the development of toleration, and the growth of independent thought. To the Oxford ecclesiologists, however, these very circumstances were amongst the heaviest indictments which they brought against the Church as it was then constituted. They had grand visions of Apostolical succession, and certainly suggested, if they did not precisely state, that no one would be entitled to differ from the Church, if the Church were only reformed according to their ideas. Curious inquirers trace back the beginning of this movement to the lectures of Bishop Lloyd on the Prayer Book and the Council of Trent, which were delivered when he was Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, about 1823. But, whatever impulse he may have given to subsequent

speculations, Dr. Lloyd does not appear among the leaders of the great movement which afterwards shook the religious world of England to its centre. Those leaders were the Rev. John Keble, author of "The Christian Year," and Fellow of Oriel; the Rev. J. H. Newman (now Cardinal Newman); the Rev. Richard Hurrell Froude (who, with Newman, was also a Fellow of Oriel); the Rev. E. B. Pusey, Regius Professor of Hebrew, and Canon of Christchurch; and the Rev. Isaac Williams, Fellow of Trinity, and author of "The Cathedral, and Other Poems." Cambridge contributed the services of the Rev. Hugh Rose; but, on the whole, the sister University was little affected by the new ideas.

The founders of the modern High Church were not long in using the press as the most effectual method of propagating their opinions. They issued a series of papers called "Tracts for the Times," of which ninety numbers were published between the years 1833 and 1841; and articles to the same effect were also published in the *British Critic*. These manifestoes produced an extraordinary effect on a large portion of the clergy, and a certain number of the laity; but at the same time they aroused the bitterest opposition amongst numerous classes of churchmen and churchgoers. It was alleged that some of the most distinctive doctrines of the Romish Church were ostentatiously paraded by the reformers as irrefragable and indispensable doctrines of the English Church; though, in some instances at least, these doctrines might be fairly inferred from the Articles and the Prayer Book. What perhaps gave more offence than anything else was the scorn and hatred with which the Tractarians, as they were soon called, repudiated the word "Protestant," as if it necessarily involved the most detestable of heresies. They called themselves "Anglicans," and would admit no other description. The most bigoted of Romish divines could hardly have regarded Luther with greater dislike than was manifested by the more extreme members of the school. The days of the Reformation were stigmatised by High Church enthusiasts as days of degradation and wickedness, and every form of Dissent was an invention of the devil. All these vagaries induced many persons, who argued rather through the medium of their alarm and anger than by means of their reason, to believe that the Tractarians were consciously and designedly preparing the way for a return to Roman Catholicism. With some, indeed—notably with Mr. J. H. Newman—this was the actual result of their speculations. But, as a body, the High Churchmen had no such intention. They had not the slightest wish to subject their Church to the orders of an Italian priest holding his court at Rome. What they really desired was to subject the whole of England—the State as well as the individual—to their conceptions of ecclesiastical predominance.

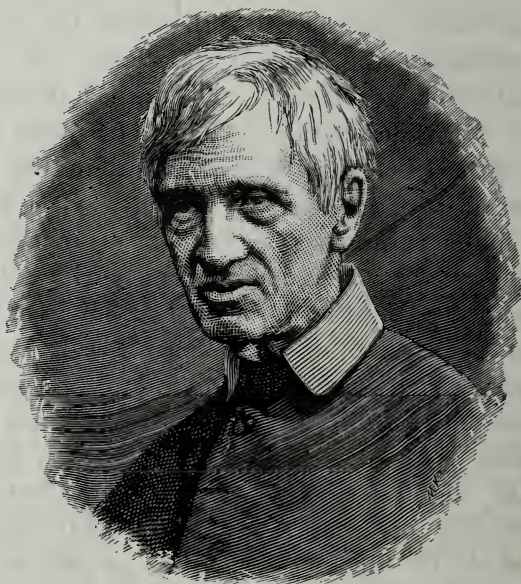
Most of the younger clergymen fell in with the Tractarian movement, as young men are generally disposed to fall in with anything new. A spirit of revivalism spread over the land. The writings of the Fathers, the ancient liturgies of the early Christian Church, the history and traditions of the Church in all ages, the lives of saints, the mediæval books of devotion and morals—all



JOHN KEBLE.

tender and emotional order. Then arose the battle of surplices, intonings, candles, and altars, which at first shocked, and afterwards exasperated, the average Englishman. It must be admitted, however, that the arguments of the Tractarians had sometimes an apparent cogency, which produced a great effect on such as were already half-disposed to be convinced. They urged with no little plausibility that the subjection of Church doctrine to the decision of a Lord Chancellor who might be a free-thinker, or a man of questionable life, was an absurdity and a scandal. But this was simply an argument against the existence of a State Church, and in that sense it was not put forth. If the Church is united with the State, it must be either as master or servant. To adopt the homely phrase of Dogberry, "An two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind;" and it is in the highest degree improbable that Englishmen will ever again consent to "ride behind" any ecclesiastical corporation in the world. Still, we may grant this truth without

these were diligently disinterred from dusty shelves where they had long slumbered, and studied in the belief that they would shed a new and divine light on modern troubles and perplexities. Gothic architecture and art, of a purer type than had been known for nearly five hundred years, were cultivated as a means of influencing the public mind in favour of the strictest ecclesiasticism. Symbolical forms were interpreted in a deeply mystical sense, and gradually the conceptions of the reformers began to find their way, not merely into the churches, but into general literature, especially into poetry of a



JOHN HENRY NEWMAN.

(From a Photograph by H. J. Whitlock, Birmingham.)

denying the earnestness, devotion, and moral purity of the Tractarians—qualities which have borne good fruit, and which will be remembered to their credit when Time has obliterated their follies.

In the early part of 1841, Mr. Newman published the celebrated "Tract No. 90," the object of which was to show that subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles need not deter a man from holding various doctrines which are commonly regarded as Romish. This was going a little too far for the patience of the authorities, and, on the 15th of March, the Vice-Chancellor and heads of houses at Oxford censured the offending Tract, in a resolution which set forth—"That modes of interpretation such as are suggested in the said Tract, evading rather than explaining the sense of the Thirty-nine Articles, and reconciling subscription to them with the adoption of errors which they were designed to counteract, defeat the object, and are inconsistent with the due observance, of the statutes of the University." Next day, Mr. Newman addressed a letter to the Vice-Chancellor, acknowledging himself as the author of the Tract. Some time after,



ST. MARY'S, FROM THE HIGH STREET, OXFORD.

he resigned the Vicarage of St. Mary's, Oxford, and in 1845 he seceded to the Church of Rome. There cannot be a doubt that in his earlier years he had no intention of quitting the Church of England. Throughout the whole of his

career, he has been thoroughly honest, conscientious, and self-devoted; but he has a mind of the acutest logical perceptions, and ultimately, though with great distress to himself, he came to the conclusion that the legitimate development of his opinions conducted him to Rome, and nowhere else. This conclusion being reached, he was not the man to tamper with his innermost convictions. His retirement from the Tractarian field concentrated additional power in the hands of the Rev. Mr. Pusey, who had long been the chief leader of the movement. Indeed, the very word "Puseyism" attests the depth and breadth of his influence.

It is no secret that neither the Queen nor Prince Albert liked the extreme views of the Tractarians, but would have preferred a broader and more liberal interpretation of Church doctrines. But the movement was of course entirely independent of Royal influences, and the time was one of awakened enthusiasm in all matters appertaining to religion. In Scotland, as in England, men's minds were being agitated by conflicting views as to the proper character of a Church; and the dispute at the North terminated in a disruption of an important nature. A party had arisen in the Kirk of Scotland which desired, like the Tractarians in the Church of England, to emancipate the religious body from the control of the State in all matters of doctrine and discipline; but this was no easy task. An Act of Parliament had been passed in 1712, which subjected the power of the Presbytery to the control of the law-courts. Until then, the appointment of pastors had been with the Church-courts of Scotland; but now the minister was in many instances nominated by a lay patron, and the Presbytery thereupon admitted him as a matter of course, unless there was some flagrant objection which could not be evaded or overcome. The popular element in the Scottish Kirk was thus subordinated to aristocratic influence, and in time many sincere members of that body were so much disgusted as to secede from the Established Church, and form separate communions of their own. Matters had reached such a pass by 1834, when the "Evangelical," as opposed to the "Moderate," party had obtained the upper hand, that the General Assembly of the Kirk affirmed the right of each congregation to exercise a veto on any presentee, in accordance with a fundamental law of the Church, "that no pastor should be intruded on any congregation contrary to the will of the people." This was the celebrated Veto Law, which soon became the subject of much controversy. The lay patrons, finding themselves deprived of what they considered their rights, resisted the ruling of the General Assembly, and appealed to the law-courts. Sometimes the decision was in favour of the one party, sometimes of the other; and at length the Strathbogie case brought the law-courts and the General Assembly into open conflict. The Presbytery of Strathbogie supported a certain minister who, in 1837, had been nominated for the parish of Marnoch. The General Assembly issued its edict that the minister was to be rejected. The majority of the local Presbytery still continuing defiant, seven of their number were, by the General Assembly, finally expelled from their places in the ministry

on the 7th of May, 1841; and, from that time forward, Dr. Chalmers, who had moved their expulsion, became the great leader of the reforming party. The controversy went on with increasing bitterness; the decisions of the Court of Session, upheld by the House of Lords, completely over-ruled the decisions of the General Assembly of the Kirk; and, on the 18th of May, 1843, nearly five hundred ministers of the Church of Scotland, under the leadership of their distinguished and eloquent champion, seceded from the Establishment, and began what is called the Free Church of Scotland. These ministers had no quarrel with the older body on matters of doctrine; but they would not submit to the dictation of lay patrons, or the control of the law-courts. Such, in brief, is the history of this memorable revolt.

In the midst of so many perplexities, it was fortunate for the new Government, and also for the Queen herself, that they had an intermediary so highly qualified to fill the part as Prince Albert. In resigning the seals of office, Lord Melbourne felt that he left her Majesty in safe hands. He confessed that it was very painful to him to bid farewell to his Royal mistress. For four years, he remarked, he had seen her every day; but he added that it was now different from what it would have been in 1839. The Prince, he observed, understood everything, and had a clever, able head. Again, on the following day, when taking his final leave of her Majesty, he said:—"You will find a great support in the Prince; he is so able. You said, when you were going to be married, that he was perfection, which I thought a little exaggerated then, but really I think now that it is in some degree realised." In commenting on these opinions in her "Journal," the Queen writes:—"Nothing could exceed the Prince's kindness to the Queen at this (for her) trying time of separation from her old friend;" and in a letter to King Leopold she quotes the following written opinion of Lord Melbourne on his Royal Highness:—"Lord Melbourne cannot satisfy himself without again stating to your Majesty in writing what he had the honour of saying to your Majesty respecting his Royal Highness the Prince. Lord Melbourne has formed the highest opinion of his Royal Highness's judgment, temper, and discretion; and he cannot but feel a great consideration and security that he leaves your Majesty in a situation in which your Majesty has the inestimable advantage of such advice and assistance. Lord Melbourne feels certain that your Majesty cannot do better than have recourse to it whenever it is needed, and rely upon it with confidence."

It was natural and inevitable that Lord Melbourne should feel a deep regret in parting from her Majesty after so long an association. It was equally natural that Sir Robert Peel should approach the Court with something of nervous apprehension. He had opposed the Queen's wishes with respect to the Ladies of the Bedchamber; shortly afterwards, he had been mainly instrumental in procuring the curtailment of the Prince's income. Nevertheless, he was received by the Prince with an unaffected cordiality which immediately put him at his ease. Like Lord Melbourne, he soon formed a very high opinion of his

Royal Highness's abilities, and the new Minister was as willing as the old to keep the Prince well acquainted with the development of the national affairs. He was also desirous to take advantage of the Prince's known proficiency in art, by placing him at the head of a Royal Commission to inquire whether the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament did not offer a fitting occasion to promote



KING LEOPOLD.

and encourage the Fine Arts in the United Kingdom. The position was accepted by his Royal Highness; and when Sir Robert Peel announced the fact to the House of Commons, he was gratified to witness (as he afterwards reported) the cordial satisfaction with which the intimation was received in every quarter. Prince Albert had very properly made it a condition of his accepting the chairmanship of this body that in the selection of its members there should be an entire exclusion of all party distinctions. The principle was carefully observed, and the noblemen and gentlemen thus brought together were appointed with the

single consideration of their fitness. This was the first of those numerous services to intellectual culture which Prince Albert rendered to his adopted country. He had now acquired an almost perfect command of English, though, when he came over to be married, in the early part of 1840, he knew but little of the language. The first of his speeches in public, however, had been delivered as early as the 1st of June, 1840, at a meeting to promote the Abolition of the Slave Trade. The speech was brief, carefully written beforehand, and committed



ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL, WINDSOR.

to memory; but the Prince was naturally very nervous in delivering it. On the 25th of June, 1841, he laid the foundation-stone of the London Porters' Association; so that he was now coming out into the light of publicity, to an extent from which he at first shrank, feeling himself a stranger in a strange land, and not being very confident as to the cordiality of the general sentiment. His acceptance, in October, of the Chairmanship of the Fine Arts Commission was another step forward in the direction to which he had recently been turning his thoughts. For several years, Prince Albert did admirable service in educating the English mind to a higher sense of artistic beauty; and, in the fulness of time, the suggestion of Sir Robert Peel bore more ample fruits than he himself could have anticipated.

On the 9th of November, 1841, the Prince of Wales was born at Buckingham Palace. As on the occasion of her previous confinement, the Queen recovered rapidly, and was able to celebrate the first anniversary of the Princess Royal's birth on the 21st of the same month. On the 6th of December, the Court removed to Windsor Castle. Addressing the King of the Belgians on the 14th of December, her Majesty wrote:—"We must all have trials and vexations; but if one's home is happy, then the rest is comparatively nothing. I assure you, dear uncle, that no one feels this more than I do. I had this autumn one of the severest trials I could have in parting with my Government, and particularly from our kind and valued friend, and I feel even now this last very much; but my happiness at home, the love of my husband, his kindness, his advice, his support, and his company, make up for all, and make me forget it." Christmas was again spent at Windsor, and the New Year was danced in after a very jovial fashion. While the dance was yet proceeding, the clock struck twelve, and at the last stroke a flourish of trumpets was blown, according to the German custom. The Queen records in her "Journal" that this peal of instruments had a very grand and solemn effect, and that it caused a sudden agitation in Prince Albert, who turned pale, while the tears started to his eyes. He was thinking of his native country and his early days.

Shortly after the birth of the young Prince—namely, on the 4th of December, 1841—the Queen created him, by Letters Patent, Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester. The Letters Patent went on to say:—"And him, our said and most dear son, the Prince of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, as has been accustomed, we do ennoble and invest with the said Principality and Earldom, by girding him with a sword, by putting a coronet on his head and a gold ring on his finger, and also by delivering a gold rod into his hand, that he may preside there, and direct and defend those parts." By the fact of his birth as heir-apparent, the Prince inherited, without the necessity of patent or creation, the dignities and titles of Duke of Saxony, by right of his father, and, by right of his mother, those of Duke of Cornwall, Duke of Rothesay, Earl of Carrick, Baron of Renfrew, Lord of the Isles, and Great Steward of Scotland.

The christening of the Prince of Wales took place on the 25th of January, 1842, in St. George's Chapel, Windsor. In the midst of great pomp and splendour, the ceremony was performed by the Archbishop of Canterbury with water specially brought from the river Jordan. The sponsors were the late King of Prussia (Frederick William IV.); the Duchess of Saxe-Coburg, represented by the Duchess of Kent; the Duke of Cambridge; the Duchess of Saxe-Gotha, represented by the Duchess of Cambridge; the Princess Sophia, represented by the Princess Augusta of Cambridge; and Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg. King Frederick William was chosen as being the ruler of the chief Protestant kingdom on the Continent; but the leading politicians of Germany, France, and Russia, saw in the selection a degree of political significance which was doubtless entirely absent. Some among the Prussians themselves feared that the King

would take advantage of his presence in England to effect that Anglicanising of the Prussian Church which was dear to his heart. When his Majesty arrived in England, however, he proved to be nothing more than a stout, middle-aged gentleman, who could tell a good story very well, and who even consented to dance a quadrille with the Queen, though his person was little suited to such exercises, and his time of life was hardly favourable to their graceful performance. The names given to the infant Prince at his christening were Albert Edward. At the conclusion of the ceremony, a silver-embossed vessel, containing a whole hogshead of mulled claret, was brought in, and served out liberally to the company, that the health of the Prince might be drunk with due honour.

Before his departure, the King of Prussia attended the meeting of Parliament on the 3rd of February, 1842. An admirable description of this ceremony is given in a letter by the Baroness Bunsen, an English lady married to the celebrated Prussian scholar, at that time Ambassador to the Court of St. James's. This lady speaks of the Queen as being "worthy and fit to be the converging point of so many rays of grandeur;" and she adds that "the composure with which she filled the throne, while awaiting the Commons, was a test of character—no fidget, and no apathy. . . . Placed in a narrow space behind her Majesty's mace-bearers, and peeping over their shoulders, I was enabled to hide and subdue the emotion I felt, in consciousness of the mighty pages in the world's history condensed in the words so impressively uttered in the silver tones of that feminine voice—Peace and War, the fate of millions, relations of countries, exertions of power felt to the extremities of the globe, alterations of Corn Laws, the birth of a future sovereign, mentioned in solemn thankfulness to Him in whose hands are nations and rulers!"

These were the serious sides of royalty; but the young Queen, and her equally young husband, were not indifferent to the lighter graces of their position. A splendid new ball-room was added to Buckingham Palace, and a number of brilliant entertainments took place in that magnificent saloon. A *bal costumé*, on the 12th of May, 1842, is believed to have been the first ever given in England by a member of the House of Brunswick. On this occasion, her Majesty appeared as Queen Philippa, consort of Edward III., and Prince Albert as Edward III. himself. The Duchess of Cambridge was received in State as Anne of Brittany, accompanied by her Court; and, after dancing had been enjoyed for some hours, supper was served with surroundings of remarkable splendour. The salvers, vases, tankards, and jewelled cups, are described by writers of the period as of unusual cost and richness. A tent belonging to Tippoo Sahib was erected within the Corinthian portico adjoining the green drawing-room, and in the course of the evening this Oriental pavilion was used as a place for refreshment. Later in the season, a second ball of a similar character was given by her Majesty, in which the dresses were confined to the reigns of George II. and III. A grand banquet at Windsor Castle on the Ascot Cup day appears also to have been conspicuous for its lavish splendour. Luncheon had been previously served

in Tippoo Sahib's tent; but the dinner itself was in St. George's Hall, the ceiling of which was emblazoned with the arms of the Knights of the Garter, from the institution of that Order down to modern times, and also with portraits of the British Kings from James I. to George IV. Immediately opposite the Queen was a pyramid of plate, crowned by the tiger's head captured at Seringapatam, and comprising the "Iluma" of precious stones which Lord Wellesley, when Governor-General of India, presented to his sovereign. The display of gold



AMBASSADORS' COURT, ST. JAMES'S PALACE.

plate, the brilliant light shed from numerous candelabra, the music furnished by two bands of the Guards stationed in a balcony, and the picturesque appearance of the Yeomen of the Guard, who stood on duty at the entrance, contributed to an effect which was truly regal in its pomp and grandeur. In the drawing-room, after dinner, the celebrated French actress, Madame Rachel, gave recitations from her principal performances; and the entertainment came to a close a little before midnight. In the then excited state of the public mind, some persons condemned these amusements, which they contrasted with the hunger and suffering to be found in other quarters; apparently not perceiving that the circulation of money must be an advantage to the community in general. But



COSTUME BALL IN BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

when the Queen and her ladies appeared in dresses of British manufacture, the agitation ceased, and it was admitted that trade and labour derived benefit from the outlay.

It was about the period of these gorgeous ceremonials that some other attempts were made (or apparently made) on the life of the Queen. The first of these occurred on Sunday, the 29th of May, when a young man, named John Francis, attacked the Royal party while returning from the Chapel Royal, St. James's Palace. As they were driving along the Mall, near Stafford House, a man stepped out from the crowd, and presented a pistol at Prince Albert. The Prince heard the trigger snap, but the weapon missed fire. He turned to the Queen, and asked, "Did you hear that?" adding, "I am sure I saw some one take aim at us." No other person, however, seems to have been aware of the attempt, and it was considered advisable that the Queen and Prince Albert should drive out again on the following day. They went towards Hampstead, and, on their return, when approaching the Palace, were again shot at. A policeman was standing close by, and Francis was immediately seized. Strange to say, the second attempt was very nearly on the same spot as that of Oxford in 1840. The culprit was the son of a machinist at Drury Lane Theatre, and had for some months been out of employment. "A little, swarthy, ill-looking rascal," is the account which Prince Albert gives of him; but he conducted himself before the authorities with a good deal of spirit, or rather, perhaps, with a good deal of impudence. Having been found guilty of high treason, he was condemned to death; but the sentence was afterwards commuted to transportation for life.

The very day after the commutation became known—namely, July 3rd—a further attempt was made by a hunchback named Bean. As in the other cases, a morbid vanity appears to have been the feeling which prompted the act. Bean escaped at the moment, but was soon afterwards arrested, and, being tried for misdemeanour—not, like the others, for high treason—was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment. The folly of charging such offenders with high treason, when it was quite certain that they would not be visited with the penalty of that offence, but with a much lighter punishment, uncertain, capricious, and variable in its nature and operation, had suggested a change of the law, and the Bill, which was in progress through Parliament at the time of Bean's attempt, received the Royal sanction a few days later. Sir Robert Peel, while consulting with Prince Albert shortly after the attempt, was so overcome by the sudden entry of her Majesty that he burst into tears, although usually a very self-contained man. The frequent repetition of such outrages was indeed a serious matter, and after the Francis affair the Queen admitted that for some time she had had a presentiment of danger hovering over her. On the occasion of Bean's attempt, her Majesty was not aware that anything had occurred until after her return to the Palace. Being informed of the fact, she calmly observed that she had expected a repetition of these attacks as long as the law remained unaltered by which they could be dealt with only as acts of high

treason. The change in the law was doubtless advisable, since it is well known that it is not so much the severity as the certainty of punishment which deters the evilly-disposed ; yet such acts will occur from time to time as long as vanity and envy remain passions of the human heart.

CHAPTER VII.

CONVULSIONS IN THE EAST.

Approaches to a Great Tragedy—State of Afghanistan—Position of Dost Mahomed in 1836—Mission of Captain Burnes to Cabul in 1837—Afghanistan, England, and Russia—Determination of the Governor-General of India to Restore Shah Soojah to the Afghan Throne—Garbling of Burnes's Despatches—Action of the Anglo-Indian Government against the Russians before Herat—British Invasion of Afghanistan in 1839—Difficulties, Dangers, and Successes of the Campaign—Cold Reception of Shah Soojah at Cabul—Operations in the Khyber Pass—Outbreak of Insurrections against the Restored Power—Actions with the British—Surrender of Dost Mahomed—Increased Turmoil among the Afghans—Massacre of November 2nd, 1841—Imbecility of General Elphinstone—Murder of Sir William Macnaghten—Agreement between the British Authorities and Akbar Khan—Retreat of the Army of Occupation—Horrors of the March, and Complete Destruction of the Army—Defence of Jellalabad by Sir Robert Sale—Operations of Generals Nott, Pollock, and Sale—Capture of Cabul—Release of the Prisoners, and Close of the War—Lord Ellenborough and the Gates of Somnauth—Murder of Stoddart and Conolly in Bokhara—Disturbed State of England in 1842—The Queen's First Visit to Scotland—Receipt of Good News from the East—Position of Prince Albert towards the State—Discretion of his Private Life—Extent of his Labours—Colonisation in New Zealand and New South Wales.

FOR some years there had been proceeding in the East a series of events which, in the early part of 1842, eventuated in one of the most tragical catastrophes of modern history. To the west of Northern India lies the independent kingdom of Afghanistan, or Cabul, as it is sometimes called after the capital city. The country is mountainous, barren, and austere ; the people—to whom some attribute a Jewish origin, but who are certainly a very mixed race—are courageous, warlike, revengeful, predatory in their habits, yet not wanting in some manly virtues. They are Mohammedans of the Sunnite communion, and consequently regard the Turkish Sultan as the head of the Moslem world ; yet their tolerance is so great that they allow several Persian Shiites to occupy high official posts, without any restriction on their distinctive rites. Afghanistan has from time to time been a conquering State. In the fifteenth century, it planted a dynasty on the throne of Delhi, which lasted until overthrown by the Mogul Baber in 1526. In the early years of the eighteenth century, it gave two monarchs to Persia, of which it had in ancient times formed a part ; but the intruders were speedily expelled. The military genius of the Afghans, however, was not to be long kept down ; and after the founding of the Durani dynasty by Ahmed Khan, in 1747, an immense Afghan Empire was rapidly created, which spread from Herat into Hindostan, and from the banks

of the Oxus to the Arabian Sea. This dominion broke up early in the present century, and in 1836 the Ameer Dost Mahomed was ruling at Cabul over a territory not very extensive or important.

This somewhat petty sovereign had at his disposal a revenue of 1,400,000 dollars, and an army of 18,000 men. But his dominions were in a disturbed state, and, at the same time, he was at war with Lahore in the east, while, in the west, the Persians had attacked Herat, at that date ruled by one of the Durani princes. Dost Mahomed was therefore very desirous of securing the friendship of the British in India. Lord Auckland, then Governor-General at Calcutta, was disposed to enter into negotiations with the Ameer, conceiving that English power in the East was menaced by the intrigues of Russia, Persia, and Afghanistan. He therefore, in September, 1837, despatched Captain Alexander Burnes to Cabul, with instructions to discuss certain matters. Unfortunately, Captain Burnes was not authorised to promise Dost Mahomed the assistance which he required, to assume a position of independence towards Persia and Russia. Both these Powers were acting for the advancement of their own interests; and, although the Ameer had listened to their suggestions, he told the British envoy that he would much rather co-operate with England, if he could obtain the terms he needed. Burnes urged upon the Governor-General of India the policy of guaranteeing the integrity of the Ameer's realm, or at least of promising him a subsidy in case of attack. But Lord Auckland would do neither, while at the same moment ordering the distracted chieftain to abandon all negotiations with the rival Powers. The natural consequence was that Dost Mahomed again leant towards the liberal, though interested, offers of Russia; but even then he would gladly have considered the proposals of England, had any been made. The Governor-General, however, preferred to enter into a treaty with Runjeet Singh and Shah Soojah—the former a leader of the Sikhs, the latter a descendant of Ahmed Khan, who had once before ruled in Afghanistan, who had been expelled from the throne, and who was generally detested by the people. Runjeet Singh was to be maintained at Peshawur (to which the Afghans considered they had a claim), and Shah Soojah to be restored to the throne of Cabul with the assistance of an English army. A more unjustifiable, a more fatal, choice was never made.

In his despatches to Lord Auckland, Captain Burnes repeatedly expressed a strong opinion against the abandonment of Dost Mahomed; but these despatches, when published by the British Government long after the writer's premature and miserable death, were so shamefully garbled that they seemed, by implication, to show that Burnes had actually supported the very policy he strenuously condemned. The fact subsequently came out, and nothing like a defence—not even a decent palliation—could be offered. The English people were kept studiously in the dark as to these manipulations; indeed, they knew very little as to what was passing on the North-western frontiers of India and beyond. Yet those events were of the gravest character, and carried with them

a train of consequences which involved the whole of the United Kingdom in a black cloud of mourning and dismay. For a while, however, matters seemed to go very well. The Persian attack on Herat—which was in truth a Russian attack in disguise—had been held in check by the courage of the garrison, led, instructed, and inspired by the skill and heroism of a young officer, named Eldred Pottinger, who was staying there at the time. Nevertheless, the place



ELDRED POTTINGER AT HERAT. (See p. 113.)

would not have been saved but for the action of the Anglo-Indian Government, which in 1838 sent a naval squadron to the Persian Gulf, and gave the Shah to understand that, if he carried his operations any farther, his persistence would be regarded as a proof of hostility to England. This had the desired effect. The blockade of Herat was abandoned, and the position was saved. The discomfiture of the Persians was a triumph effected without bloodshed, and really valuable in its results. Herat has always been regarded as the key of India, and justly so, when we consider that all the great roads from the west converge within its territory, and that it is capable of producing whatever an army may require.

Captain Burnes left Cabul on the 26th of April, 1838, and met Lord

Auckland at Simla. On the 1st of October in the same year, a manifesto was issued by the Governor-General, which was virtually a declaration of war against Dost Mahomed. Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Macnaghten, Secretary to the Government of India, was appointed Minister at the court of Shah Soojah, before any such court existed; and he was to be helped in his operations by Sir Alexander Burnes, for the discredited envoy had now been made a knight. Unanticipated alterations of plan, consequent on the bad faith of Runjeet Singh, who at the last moment refused to allow a passage through his dominions, as he had promised, delayed the starting of the expedition, which did not get on its way until the late winter of 1839. The army, which was in three divisions, consisted of British troops, Afghans, and Sikhs; and it was encumbered with a large number of camp-followers and baggage-animals. The routes pursued were beset by all those difficulties which belong to a mountainous and rocky land. Numbers of men and camels were lost; the soldiers were disheartened by fatigue, and by the gloom of their surroundings; food began to fail; the supplies which were expected at Quetta, beyond the further end of the Bolan Pass, were not forthcoming; and the two principal divisions of the invading force, which had now effected their junction, pushed forward, in a half-famished state, and by a long and difficult defile, to Candahar, which was reached on the 25th of April. The city surrendered without a blow; but the army was now greatly reduced in numbers, and could not reckon more than 10,400 fighting men. Shah Soojah was proclaimed at Candahar, and Sir John Keane, who had command of the whole invading force, while attached more particularly to the Bombay column, then set out for Ghizni, two hundred and thirty miles distant from Candahar, which was itself more than a thousand miles from the points of departure.

Ghizni offered a determined resistance, but was taken by storm on the 23rd of July, when the son of Dost Mahomed, Gholam Hyder Khan, who held the command, was captured. Sir John Keane next pushed on to Cabul, where the fall of Ghizni had produced a feeling of such extreme consternation that the Ameer found himself unable to act against the enemy, and therefore fled with a few attendants to the mountain solitudes of the Hindoo Koosh, on the north-eastern boundary of Afghanistan. The English army, accompanied by Shah Soojah, entered Cabul on the 7th of August; but the demeanour of the people was cold, and the British were detested as strangers, as conquerors, and as Christians. On September 3rd, the invaders were joined by the third division, consisting for the most part of Afghans and Sikhs, under the orders of Colonel Wade, who had taken the fort of Ali Musjid (situated in a narrow part of the Khyber Pass) and the city of Jelalabad. It now seemed as if the Afghans were entirely subdued, and, in its premature satisfaction, the British Government showered honours on the persons principally concerned. Lord Auckland was made an Earl; Sir John Keane a Baron, with a pension of £2,000; and Mr. Macnaghten a Baronet. Other officials received inferior distinctions, and

Shah Soojah created an Order of the Durani Empire, the insignia of which were bestowed on many English officers. Nevertheless, the people were thoroughly discontented, and surveyed with a sullen eye the military reviews and splendid ceremonials which it was hoped would reconcile them to the restored rule of Shah Soojah. They were *not* reconciled, for the new sovereign was regarded as the mere creature of the British authorities, whose pensioner he had been for many years, and by whom he was now forcibly imposed on a reluctant people, who had never invited his return.

The new settlement was believed to be so entirely safe that many of our troops were sent back long before the close of 1839, and the occupying force then consisted of 8,000 men, Europeans and Sepoys. As if inspired by some evil fate, the English officers wrote to India for their wives and children. In the spring of 1840, the British and Sepoy regiments were removed from the Bala Hissar (a fortified palace of great strength), and stationed in cantonments on the neighbouring plain, where they had scarcely any protection against the sudden attack of an enemy. These attacks speedily came. The country began to seethe with insurrection. British outposts were assailed, and, as the summer advanced, the fighting became serious. Dost Mahomed was again in arms, moving about rapidly from place to place, and sometimes gaining the advantage. In one of these encounters, he discomfited a British force under Sir Robert Sale, by whom he was attacked, on the 2nd of November, in the Purwandurrah valley. The disaster was chiefly owing to the misconduct of some Hindoo cavalry, who precipitately retreated, and sought shelter among the English guns. Everything was thrown into confusion, and Sale's force was only just able to cut its way back to Cabul. It might reasonably have been supposed that, after this brilliant success, Dost Mahomed (whose heroism and capacity have been warmly acknowledged by English writers) should have advanced with all his warriors to the capital. But he felt his inability to cope with such a power as England, and on the following day he rode up to the quarters of Sir William Macnaghten, introduced himself as the deposed Ameer, and delivered up his sword. When the British Minister had recovered from his surprise, he returned the sword, treated his prisoner with due honour, and, on the 12th of November, sent him to India under a strong escort. Again, apparently, had Fortune smiled upon the English cause.

But the insurrection against the authority of Shah Soojah still continued with unabated violence. In spite of this obvious danger, however, the British army of occupation was still further reduced in 1841, and the pension to native chiefs for abstaining from plunder was considerably lessened. The peril increased with every day; yet only a few of the military or civil officers could perceive its existence. Sir William Macnaghten and Sir Alexander Burnes appear to have been perfectly contented with the existing state of things; though Sir Robert Sale, having been sent to quell an insurrection of the Ghiljies, found his communications with Cabul seriously threatened, and though Major Pottinger (Eldred Pottinger, the defender of Herat) warned Sir William of the danger

by which he was menaced. Sir John Keane having returned to England, the chief command of the British forces devolved on Sir Willoughby Cotton, who had previously led the Bengal column. Cotton was a man of approved ability, but



FORT ALI MUSJID IN THE KHYBER PASS.

he was soon afterwards superseded by General Elphinstone—an old and infirm officer, whose nerves were quite unfitted to sustain the shock by which they were soon to be entirely shattered. Sir William Macnaghten having been appointed to the Governorship of Bombay, his position as British Minister at Cabul was conferred on Sir Alexander Burnes; but, owing to the disturbed state of the country, the former was unable to leave the Afghan capital, and consequently

fell in the massacre which shortly afterwards broke out. Cabul burst into a flame of excitement on the morning of November 2nd—the very day after that on which Burnes had assumed his new functions, and when he congratulated Macnaghten on leaving Afghanistan in a state of “profound tranquillity.” The mob surrounded the residence of Burnes, threatened him and his brother, and shot his military secretary, Lieutenant Broadfoot. One of the insurgents, who



SIR ROBERT AND LADY SALE.

had sworn by the Koran that he would escort the brothers in safety to the fort, treacherously betrayed them to the rioters, by whom they were slain with knives. All the other inhabitants of the house, including women and children, were also murdered, and the edifice itself was burnt to ashes. General Elphinstone, who was in the cantonments with his troops, seems to have been utterly prostrated by the news, nor were any of his officers better prepared for the emergency. No steps were taken against the insurgents, and Elphinstone contented himself with saying that they must wait until the morning, and then see what could be done.

All he did when the morning came was to send urgent messages to Sir Robert Sale, who was then on his way to Jelalabad, to proceed as rapidly as possible to Cabul. Sir Robert, however, thought it a matter of such paramount

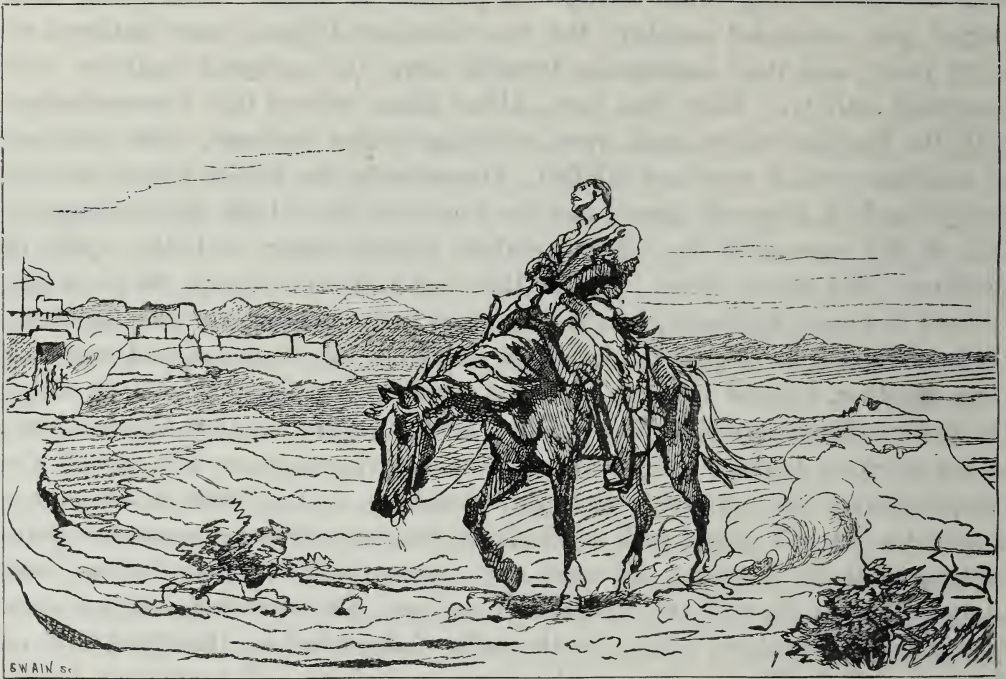
importance to keep open the communications with India, that he pursued his way to Jelalabad, and fortunately so, as was proved by after events. General Nott despatched three regiments to Candahar, in the hope of relieving the Cabul garrison; but the difficulties of the way and the severity of the weather were so great that they turned back, after accomplishing a portion of the distance. The cantonments at Cabul were now commanded by two guns, which the Afghans had planted on a neighbouring hill; and the British troops failed in an attempt to break out into the open country. The supplies of food ran short, and ultimately failed altogether; so that an agreement of some kind became an absolute necessity. The last act of Sir William Macnaghten was to open negotiations with the Afghan chiefs; but on the 23rd of December—a few days later—he was treacherously murdered by Akbar Khan, the eldest son of Dost Mahomed, who was now the leader of the insurrection. The two had entered into some rather obscure negotiations for making Akbar the Vizier and virtual master of Shah Soojah, and putting down the other chiefs. An interview was arranged for discussing this project; but a misunderstanding arose, and Macnaghten was shot by Akbar Khan, who afterwards, however, expressed great remorse for the deed. Shah Soojah appears to have acted with energy and good faith; but at the very commencement of the revolt his troops were overpowered by superior numbers, and he could now do nothing. The action of the malcontents was characterised by the utmost treachery. They had undertaken to furnish supplies, if the forts which guarded the cantonments were placed in their hands. The terms were accepted, but no food was forthcoming, while the possession of the forts by the enemy placed the cantonments wholly at his mercy. Matters therefore proceeded from bad to worse, and at length it was agreed that all the guns, excepting six, together with all the treasure, should be relinquished; that four officers should be put into the hands of the chiefs as hostages; and that 40,000 rupees, in bills drawn upon India, to be negotiated on the spot by some Hindoo bankers, should be paid to the Afghans. In exchange for these concessions, Akbar Khan promised to conduct the English regiments to Jelalabad; but he had not the power, even if he had the will, to make good his words. Our share of the agreement was honourably carried out to the minutest tittle; that of the Afghans was murderously broken.

The cantonments were quitted by the British troops on the 6th of January, 1842. The troops not unnaturally murmured at having to give up the guns and ammunition; but there was no help for it, and the doomed regiments filed out towards the desert in a condition little capable of successful defence against attack. The number of fighting men was not more than 4,500 (chiefly Asiatics); but they were accompanied by 12,000 camp-followers, including the wives and children of the officers. An inclement winter, with deep snow encumbering all the roads, added to the horrors of the time, and the Ghiljies began to attack the rear-guard immediately it had got clear of the cantonments. The fugitives entered the Khoord-Cabul Pass on the 8th of January, 1842, and attacks now

became frequent and unsparing. The Afghans were posted on the surrounding crags, and the English officers and troops began to fall rapidly. Many of the women were carried away; many of the children were killed. Fatigue, cold, and deprivation slew as many as the bullets of the lurking foe. Some of our men became mutinous, and intoxicated themselves with the stores of brandy which they had violently seized. Ere long, all military discipline was lost. The men thought only of themselves, and, disregarding the commands of their officers, hurried on towards Jelalabad as fast as horses, camels, or their own legs, could carry them. Several were frozen every night by the intense cold; and those who woke in the morning, woke simply to a prospect of despair. One gloomy and rugged pass succeeded another; but the relentless Afghans were stationed at every point, and their matchlocks brought down the scattered fugitives with unrelenting activity. More than once, Akbar Khan entered into communication with the English officers, and, upon receiving further hostages, made promises of assistance which were not fulfilled. Occasionally the British troops and the Sepoys made a desperate stand, and for a moment drove back their assailants; but, as day succeeded day, their numbers became fewer, and the spirit of resistance died within them. On the 12th and 13th of January, the force was reduced to a mere fragment; but, in proportion to the smallness of their numbers, the men seemed to recover the habits of discipline they had lost, and, standing close together, entered into hand-to-hand conflicts with the Afghans, in which the latter suffered severely. The position, however, was absolutely hopeless, and, in the course of January 13th, thirty soldiers—all who were now left, though the camp-followers still numbered two or three hundred—took up their station on the slopes of a hill, and fought with wonderful resolution until overpowered and slain. Setting aside the hostages, all were now exterminated—English, Sepoys, and camp-followers; all, with the exception of one man, who, wounded, and in a state approaching exhaustion, rode up to the walls of Jelalabad on that fatal 13th of January, still holding in his nerveless grasp a broken and unavailing sword. The survivor of the great catastrophe was Dr. Brydon, one of the medical officers, who had somehow managed to escape the massacre, and who conveyed intelligence of what had happened to General Sale and his gallant companions, then holding a position which in itself was desperate.

On one of the occasions when Akbar Khan held parley with the fugitives, he suggested that the ladies and children should be given up to him, and he undertook to convey them in safety to Peshawur. These terms were accepted, with the single modification that the husbands of the married ladies should accompany their wives. As the women and children could not have escaped massacre, or death from cold and fatigue, had they remained with the army, the arrangement was a wise one, as it offered them at least a chance of life. They were treated with some consideration, and ultimately rescued during the military operations of a later period. Two days later—namely, on the 11th of January—Akbar Khan again entered into negotiations with the English officers, and

demanded that General Elphinstone, Brigadier Shelton, and Captain Johnson, should be given up to him as additional hostages. This was done, and the chief commander of the British forces went into captivity with his two subordinates. The treaty concluded by General Elphinstone and Akbar Khan, before the former quitted Cabul, contained an article stipulating that the English force at Jelalabad should march for Peshawur before the Cabul army arrived, and should not delay on the road. Information of this agreement was conveyed to Jelalabad by a band of horsemen, who, under cover of a flag of truce, pre-



THE REMNANT OF AN ARMY: ARRIVAL OF DR. BRYDON AT JELALABAD. (See p. 119.)

(Sketch of the Picture by Lady Butler.)

sented themselves before the gates. They bore with them a despatch from General Elphinstone, ordering Sir Robert Sale to evacuate the country without delay. Sale was placed in a very difficult position; for Elphinstone was his superior officer, and yet to obey his orders, as by strict military duty he was bound to do, might entail the destruction of his whole force. He accordingly summoned a council of war, at which it was formally resolved that to obey such an order would be imprudent. The position, therefore, was held with splendid gallantry. The ruined fortifications had already been reconstructed, and every effort was now made to supply the town with food and fuel. It was known that an army under General Pollock was hastening to the relief of the garrison; but some time must elapse ere it could arrive, and in the meanwhile the situation

was fraught with peril. Akbar Khan, with a numerous army, had appeared before the walls; but Sale determined to hold out to the last. On the 19th of January, an earthquake shook the defences of the town into ruins; and had



DOST MAHOMED.

Akbar immediately assaulted the place, it is almost certain that he would have taken it. Probably, the unexpected convulsion inspired him with awe, and, as the English at once set to work to repair the damage that had been done, they were soon in a position to resist attack. In the early part of April, food and ammunition began to fail, and the spirited commander determined on active operations. On the 7th of the month the Afghans were attacked and driven off. With the remnant of his disheartened army, Akbar fled towards Cabul, leaving in our hands a vast amount of stores. Pollock was with difficulty forcing his way through the Khyber Pass; on the 16th of April he arrived at Jelalabad; at the

same time, General Nott and Major (afterwards Sir Henry) Rawlinson were holding Candahar; but Colonel Palmer, after a gallant defence, was forced to surrender Ghizni to the Afghans. In the same month which witnessed the relief of Jelalabad, Shah Soojah was assassinated by the adherents of his elder brother—a man, like himself, far advanced in years. The position of Nott at Candahar was precarious, but, when at length relieved, he was able to join Sale and Pollock in an advance on Cabul, where they resolved to avenge the injuries of their countrymen. The chief command was in the hands of Nott, who showed himself a thoroughly capable officer. His first proceeding was to retake Ghizni, and on the 17th of September all three divisions effected their junction at Cabul. It is lamentable to be obliged to add that the city was pillaged by our infuriated soldiers, though perhaps not with the sanction of their commanders, and that needless destruction and slaughter marked the path of the avenging army.

The English prisoners, including the women and children, had during their captivity been frequently moved about from place to place, often in the most terrible extremities of weather, and under circumstances of great hardship; but when the British army arrived at Cabul, they were on their way back to



AKBAR KHAN.

that city. General Elphinstone had died on the 23rd of April; the other members of the party were alive and well. On the 12th of October, the invaders left Cabul, and again, as on the occasion of their advance, passed through defiles still rendered terrible by the whitening bones of their comrades. The greater part of Jelalabad was destroyed, together with the fortifications; Ali Musjid, in the Khyber Pass, was blown into the air; and Afghanistan was entirely evacuated by our troops before the close of 1842. The policy of Lord Auckland was now completely reversed by his successor, Lord Ellenborough, whose term of office had commenced on the 28th of February. In announcing the withdrawal of the British forces from Afghanistan (which he did in a proclamation dated from Simla on the 1st of October), Lord Ellenborough observed that "to force a sovereign upon a reluctant people would be as inconsistent with the policy as it is with the principles of the British Government." That, no doubt, was the only just position to assume; but it should have been assumed three or four years earlier, and England would then have been spared one of the greatest and most humiliating disasters in the long course of her history. Our interposition had entailed infinite misery on ourselves and on the Afghans, and it had been absolutely unproductive of any good whatever. The country which we had taken under our protection, and from which we had been ignominiously expelled, was now in a state of anarchy, and, as that anarchy was of our own creation, it behoved us to do something towards the restoration of order. Dost Mahomed was set at liberty by the Anglo-Indian Government; and he whom we had refused to recognise in 1838, whom we had driven forth in 1839, and whom we received as a prisoner in 1840, was in 1843 restored to the throne which he seems to have had a legitimate claim to fill. His reign was thus divided into two parts, and the division is marked by a wide river of human blood.

After a tragedy, it was formerly the custom to play a farce. One might almost suppose that the principle involved in this theatrical usage had influenced the mind of Lord Ellenborough in a certain exploit which he performed, in a very demonstrative spirit, shortly after the conclusion of the Afghan war. When Sultan Mahmoud took the Hindoo city of Somnauth, in 1025, he carried away with him the gates of the vast temple dedicated to the god Soma, the idols of which he had shattered and cast down. These trophies were taken to the Imperial city of Ghizni, from which Mahmoud ruled his wide possessions; and there they had remained, or something like them had been preserved, during a period of more than eight hundred years. Lord Ellenborough was a man of great ability, but of somewhat grandiose and theatrical tastes, even in the management of practical affairs. He therefore determined to bring back the so-called Gates of Somnauth to the place whence they had been originally removed. The act would have been foolish enough, even had the genuineness of the gates been entirely beyond dispute, which was very far from the case. The Mohammedans could not but have felt insulted by the restoration of

anything connected with a gross idolatry, formerly destroyed by one of the most illustrious of Moslem sovereigns; while the Hindoos were simply reminded of their ancient disgrace and humiliation. These considerations, however, were absent from the mind of Lord Ellenborough, or disregarded by him; and on the 16th of November, 1842, he issued a sonorous proclamation to all the princes, chiefs, and people of India. "My brothers and my friends," he said, "our victorious army bears the gates of the Temple of Somnauth in triumph from Afghanistan, and the despoiled tomb of Sultan Mahmoud looks upon the ruins of Ghizni. The insult of eight hundred years is at last avenged. The gates of the Temple of Somnauth, so long the memorial of your humiliation, are become the proudest record of your national glory,—the proof of your superiority in arms over the nations beyond the Indus. To you, princes and chiefs of Sirhind, of Rajwarra, of Malwa and Guzerat, I shall commit this glorious trophy of successful war. You will yourselves, with all honour, transmit the gates of sandal-wood through your respective territories to the restored Temple of Somnauth." On the 14th of January, 1843, the gates were carried into Delhi in state, under a canopy of crimson and gold; but the proceedings afterwards created great annoyance in England, and were made the subject of animated Parliamentary debates.

Again we must revert to tragedy, for it is impossible to pass over, in the events of this period, some terrible circumstances which occurred in Bokhara, and of which two of our own countrymen were the victims. Colonel Stoddart had been sent a few years previously to the Persian camp before Herat, to insist that Persia must abandon the siege of that important position. Thence he proceeded on some official business to Bokhara, where, after a time, the Ameer became suspicious of his designs, and threw him into prison. At a later date, Captain Arthur Conolly was sent into the same country, but, after making a vain attempt to procure the liberation of Stoddart, was himself confined in a subterranean dungeon, where he and his fellow-sufferer were kept in complete darkness, without being allowed to change their clothes, or to wash themselves, and with a very insufficient supply of food, which was let down to them once in four or five days. The Ameer suspected the two strangers of being spies in the employment of his enemies, and their case was considerably prejudiced by the refusal of the Indian and Home Governments to recognise the captives as official agents. Conolly had in the first instance gone to Khokand, where he was engaged in endeavouring to effect the release of slaves; but Lord Ellenborough declared that he had no knowledge of his mission to that country having been authorised, and he added that that unfortunate officer had been expressly instructed by the President of the Board of Control *not* to go to Khokand, so that, it was remarked, he in all probability owed his misfortunes to the direct transgression of those orders. How far these statements are to be accepted as absolute truth, appears somewhat doubtful; but at any rate the adoption of such a tone was ill calculated to obtain the release of the prisoners from a ferocious

tyrant like the Ameer of Bokhara. Appeals, it is true, were made to his good feelings; but unfortunately he did not possess any, and the condition of the prisoners became progressively worse. Under these circumstances, Dr. Wolff, a German Jew who had been converted to Christianity, courageously undertook an expedition to Bokhara, in the hope of delivering the prisoners. On arriving in that country, however, he heard they had already been put to death. The



HOLYROOD PALACE, EDINBURGH.

double execution seems to have been in the summer of 1843, some time before Dr. Wolff even set out on his expedition. The heroic missionary was himself imprisoned for a considerable time, but at length obtained his release, and came to England in 1845, when he was enthusiastically received by all who had watched his fortunes with mingled admiration and alarm.

While Afghanistan was distracted by a vengeful war, the general state of England continued even worse than in the earlier part of the year. Parliament was prorogued on the 12th of August, 1842, by the Queen in person, and in the Speech from the Throne her Majesty expressed a hope that the members of the two Houses "would do their utmost to encourage, by example and active exertions, that spirit of order and submission to the law without which there



THE QUEEN'S ENTRY INTO EDINBURGH. (See p. 127.)

can be no enjoyment of the fruits of peaceful industry, and no advance in the career of social improvement." Sedition was indeed becoming more ripe every day. In the manufacturing towns, mills were violently entered by disorderly mobs, their machinery was destroyed, and those who were willing to work were compelled to abandon their labours. Manchester was in so disturbed a state that a regiment of the Guards was despatched thither to overawe the malcontents; and in many of the northern towns collisions, attended by bloodshed and loss of life, occurred from time to time. The demand of the workpeople was for increase of wages; but political ideas also were mixed up with the purely social question. The Chartists joined the discontented artisans, and for a while the Government was seriously alarmed. But the arrest of the leaders struck terror into the rest, and, as the autumn advanced, the worst of the danger was at an end. In the west of Scotland, however, disturbances continued for some time longer; yet it was at this period that the Queen and Prince Albert paid their first visit to the Northern Kingdom.

It had been intended by the Royal couple to visit Belgium in the autumn of 1842, to meet there some members of the family of Louis Philippe. This design, however, was frustrated by the unhappy death of the Duke of Orleans, who was killed by an accident on the 13th of July. The Duke was the favourite brother of the Queen of the Belgians, and the sad event threw both Courts into the deepest mourning. Her Majesty and Prince Albert were profoundly afflicted by the casualty, and, being unable to visit Belgium, resolved to turn their faces towards Scotland. Notwithstanding the turbulence of the Scottish working classes in the manufacturing cities, the reception given to the Queen and her husband was of the most enthusiastic character, and the journey of 1842 became a precedent for many later years. The Royal yacht was accompanied by a squadron of nine vessels, in addition to which were the Trinity House steamer and a packet. The voyage was slow and tedious, and her Majesty suffered a good deal from the roughness of the sea. She was much struck by the first appearance of the Scottish coast, which she describes as "dark, rocky, bold, and wild." At half-past six on the evening of August 31st, they passed St. Abb's Head, and her Majesty records that "numbers of fishing boats (in one of which was a piper playing), and steamers full of people, came out to meet us, and on board of one large steamer they danced a reel to a band. It was a beautiful evening, calm, with a fine sunset, and the air so pure."* As the Royal yacht proceeded up the Frith of Forth under the gathering darkness, the neighbouring heights were seen to be lighted with beacon-fires, to which the yacht responded by sending up rockets and burning blue lights. The Royal party landed at Leith on the 1st of September, and drove in a barouche to Edinburgh, with which both the Queen and Prince Albert were greatly pleased. The various historical monuments and buildings in the Scottish capital, and the objects of

* Leaves from the Journal of our Life in the Highlands.

interest in the neighbourhood, proved sources of great delight to the distinguished visitors; and Prince Albert, writing to the Duchess of Saxe-Gotha on the 18th of September, shortly after the return to Windsor, says:—"Scotland has made a most favourable impression upon us both. The country is full of beauty, of a severe and grand character; perfect for sport, and the air remarkably pure and light in comparison with what we have here. The people are more natural, and marked by that honesty and sympathy which always distinguish the inhabitants of mountainous countries who live away from towns. There is, moreover, no country where historical traditions are preserved with such fidelity, or to the same extent." Although the stay of the Royal visitors was not very long, they entered the Highlands, and at every point were received with the warmth which Scotsmen are not slow to exhibit when their national pride is delicately touched.

When the Queen first entered Edinburgh, there had been a slight mistake, which occasioned some inconvenience. It was expected that her Majesty would be received by the Lord Provost and magistrates of the city; but, owing to a misconception as to the hour of landing, they were not there. To make up for the disappointment thus occasioned, the Queen re-entered the city on the 3rd of September, when she was received in state by the authorities. The route, which was crowded with sight-seers, was from Holyrood, up the Canongate and High Street, to the Castle, and then by the Earthen Mound and Princes Street to Dalmeny Park, the seat of the Earl of Rosebery. On the same day, the foundation-stone of Victoria Hall, designed for the use of the General Assembly of the Kirk, was laid in honour of her Majesty's visit; and on later days the seats of some of the Scottish nobility were visited by the Royal party, when a great deal was seen of the Highland clans and their feudal usages. The Queen sailed from Granton Pier on the 15th of September, and a letter was addressed to the Lord Advocate by the Earl of Aberdeen, in which the latter was instructed to say:—"The Queen will leave Scotland with a feeling of regret that her visit on the present occasion could not be farther prolonged. Her Majesty fully expected to witness the loyalty and attachment of her Scottish subjects; but the devotion and enthusiasm evinced in every quarter, and by all ranks, have produced an impression on the mind of her Majesty which can never be effaced." The journey was in many respects a memorable one; and shortly after the return of her Majesty and the Prince, they received intelligence of the fall of Ghizni and Cabul, of the rescue of the prisoners in Afghanistan, and of the conclusion of peace with China. The news reached them on the 23rd of November at Walmer Castle, which had been placed at their disposal by the Duke of Wellington. It was the desire of the Queen that a Chinese and also an Afghan medal should be struck, and distributed throughout the armies. Lord Ellenborough however, had already, though without due authority, issued medals to the Indian army, and all that her Majesty could now do was to confer honours on the combatants in China.

The interest of Prince Albert in English politics continued to increase with every year, and the Queen leant proportionately on his judgment for direction in affairs of State. The Prince never obtruded his advice, yet it was none the less a subtle influence, pervading the mind of his consort, and operating for good in many ways. The Ministry of Sir Robert Peel was even more inclined than that of Lord Melbourne to admit this influence: and as early as 1842 suggestions were made that, in the event of the Duke of Wellington's death, the office of Commander-in-Chief should be conferred upon the Prince. Baron Stockmar, whose judgment was frequently appealed to on such matters, both by the Royal Family and the Government, was consulted on this subject; but the project met with his entire disapproval. It was one of many instances showing the good sense possessed by that devoted friend of the Prince and of her Majesty. The occupation of such a post by a foreigner would not unreasonably have offended the susceptibilities of the English nation. The Prince himself saw the wisdom of the Baron's advice, though it would seem that there was occasionally a little sensitiveness in his own mind as to the light in which he was regarded by Englishmen generally. His secretary, Mr. Anson, has recorded that one day, about this period, the Prince, in reading Hallam's "Constitutional History," copied out and sent to him a passage concerning William III., which runs:—"The demeanour of William, always cold, and sometimes harsh, *his foreign origin* (a sort of *crime in English eyes*), etc., conspired to keep alive this disaffection." In talking over this matter with the Prince, Mr. Anson observed that a laudable and natural jealousy of foreigners prevailed in the minds of Englishmen, but that he did not think any such feeling existed towards the Prince himself. His Royal Highness fully admitted this view, and acknowledged the kindness with which he had been received in England. Yet it is difficult to understand why he should have made so pointed an extract, unless he had thought that it contained, by reflection, some kind of reference to his own case.

In one respect especially, the example of Prince Albert was of the greatest value to the whole nation. He maintained a high character for honour and purity in the Court, and thence, by a species of moral contagion of the better kind, throughout the circles with which he was immediately connected. From the very commencement of his career in England, he determined, not merely that his actions should be free from reproach, but that his whole conduct should be so strictly governed as to render reproach impossible. This noble resolve has been well described by General Grey, who, in his interesting work on the early life of the Prince, writes:—"He imposed a degree of restraint and self-denial upon his own movements which could not but have been irksome, had he not been sustained by a sense of the advantage which the Throne would derive from it. He denied himself the pleasure—which, to one so fond as he was of personally watching and inspecting every improvement that was in progress, would have been very great—of walking at will about the town. Wherever he went, whether in a carriage or on horseback, he was accompanied by his equerry. He

paid no visits in general society. His visits were to the studio of the artist, to museums of art or science, to institutions for good and benevolent purposes. Wherever a visit from him, or his presence, could tend to advance the real good of the people, there his horses might be seen waiting; never at the door of mere



LORD JOHN RUSSELL. (*From the Statue by Sir J. E. Boehm, R.A.*)

fashion.”* To this testimony may be added that of her Majesty, who has recorded that he would frequently return to luncheon at a great pace, and would always come through the Queen’s dressing-room, where she generally was at that time, with that bright, loving smile with which he ever greeted her; telling where he had been—what new buildings he had seen—what

* Early Years of the Prince Consort.

studios, &c., he had visited. Riding for mere riding's sake he disliked, and said, "It bores me so!"

By this date his time was fully occupied, for he had undertaken many duties, and was obliged to see many people. In the autumn of 1842 he undertook some of the duties of the Privy Purse, which until then had been discharged by the Baroness Lehzen; and it was about this time that he began to give serious attention to that reorganisation of the Royal Household which has already been described. The demands upon him had indeed become so incessant that he was often obliged to sacrifice his hasty rides. In the December of the same year her Majesty writes to Baron Stockmar to the effect that measures should be taken "to prevent his being besieged in London by so many unnecessary people. His health is so invaluable, not only to me (to whom he is more than all-in-all), but to this whole country, that we must do our duty, and manage that he is not so overwhelmed with people." The Prince was in fact a working man in the truest sense of the word. His life was one of almost incessant toil, and the pleasures with which he lightened and relieved it were those of an intellectual inquirer, who could be satisfied with nothing that was frivolous or base.

In the existing distress at this period of our history, much attention was given to colonisation. On the 28th of April, a meeting was held in London under the Presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury, with a view to raising funds for sending out Bishops to our distant possessions, and a large sum of money was obtained for that purpose. On the same day the preliminary expedition of the second colony to New Zealand sailed under the command of Captain Wakefield, and the colony itself was to be formed on the principle laid down by Mr. Edward Gibbon Wakefield, which provided that the land-produce fund should be applied to the purpose of obtaining labour. Scarcely anything was known of New Zealand until 1769-70, when it was circumnavigated by Captain Cook, and found to be insular, and not continental, as had been supposed. Very little was done in the way of colonisation until 1839, when a New Zealand Company was established, and the town of Wellington was founded. On the 13th of February, 1841, a dinner was given to Lord John Russell, then Colonial Secretary, to celebrate the foundation of England's most recent colony; and in subsequent years the settlement made excellent progress, though often exposed to attack from the Maories. In 1842 a law received the Royal Assent conferring a representative Government on New South Wales; and, from this time forward, the colonies of Great Britain wisely received from the Home Administration and Legislature a greater amount of attention than had been previously bestowed.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF SIR ROBERT PEELE.

Renewed Popularity of the Queen—Services of Prince Albert—A Volunteer Poet Laureate—Birth of the Princess Alice—The Whig Deficit, and how Sir Robert Peel dealt with it—The Income Tax, and Reduction of Duties—The Sliding Scale—Advance of Free Trade Principles—Assassination of Mr. Drummond—The Question of Criminal Insanity—Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Colden—Disturbances in South Wales: "Rebecca" and her Daughters—Condition of Women in Mines and Collieries—Lord Ashley and the Factories Act—Opinion of the Queen and Prince Albert on the Qualities of Sir Robert Peel—Levees held by the Prince—The Frescoes for the Houses of Parliament—Encouragement of Fresco-Painting by the Queen and Prince Albert—The Summer House in the Gardens of Buckingham Palace—Visit of her Majesty and the Prince to Louis Philippe at the Château d'Eu—The Duke of Wellington on the Necessity for a Council of Regency—Designs of France on the Succession to the Spanish Throne—Dishonest Engagement of the French King—English Opinion completely Misled—Royal Visits to Belgium, to Cambridge, and to the Midlands—The Prince as a Fox-hunter—Model Farming—Events in India: Wars in Scinde and Gwalior.

A VERY important and very happy result of Prince Albert's influence was seen in the revived popularity of the Queen after a few years had passed. In 1839, as the reader is aware, the feeling with which her Majesty was regarded by a wide section of the people revealed a danger of no inconsiderable magnitude, and threatened to give a peculiarly acrid character to political discussion. By 1842 this sentiment had very nearly disappeared; and the change was largely due to the companionship and advice of the Queen's consort. We must not forget, however, the excellent guidance which the Prince himself received from Baron Stockmar; and although Englishmen cannot but have felt a little jealous that their political and social state was so much influenced by foreigners, they must have been none the less grateful for the fact, let it come how it might. For the improved state of public feeling Prince Albert obtained no credit at the time. The people knew very little about him, and the aristocracy, who had opportunities of seeing his Royal Highness, considered him somewhat cold and haughty. The opinion was not altogether unwarranted, though it proceeded from a misapprehension. A certain reserve of manner resulted almost inevitably from the severe moral restrictions which the Prince laid upon himself; but who would not purchase so great a gain at the cost of a few external attractions, not necessarily associated with the higher virtues?

During the first few years of her reign the Queen had not the benefit (such as it is) of those poetical eulogiums which are reasonably to be expected by a court which maintains a Poet Laureate. Although Southey, the then holder of the office, did not die until 1843, his mental state had for some years been such as to render all intellectual work impossible. In this interregnum of Parnassus, Leigh Hunt—who, a generation earlier, had been imprisoned for libelling the Prince Regent, but who was converted to courtliness by the liberal development of modern times—addressed some verses to the Queen, in the earliest of which, with the quaint familiarity of his genius, he commends her Majesty for possessing

“the ripe Guelph cheek, and good, straight Coburg brow,” which were held to be significant of “pleasure and reason.” The poet afterwards alludes to the recent birth of the Princess Royal in lines of touching beauty. Still speaking of the Queen herself, he writes:—

“May her own soul, this instant, while I sing,
Be smiling, as beneath some angel’s wing,
O’er the dear life in life, the small, sweet, new,
Unselfish self, the filial self of two,
Bliss of her future eyes, her pillow’d gaze,
On whom a mother’s heart thinks close, and prays.”

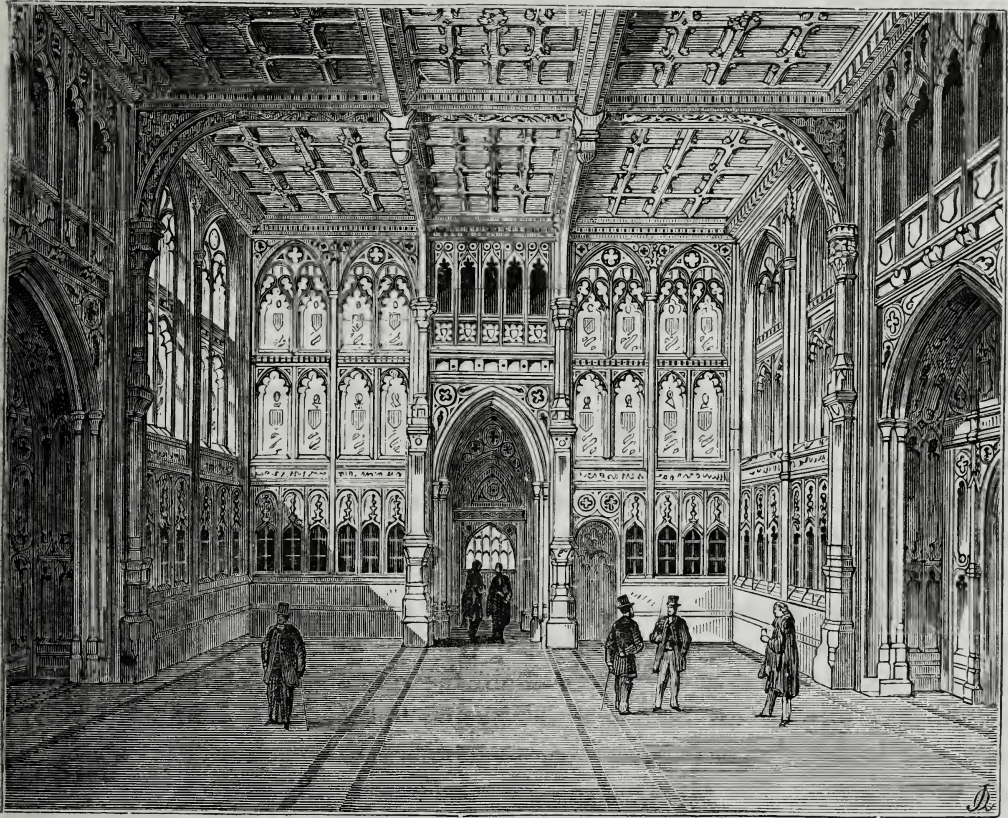
Another poem, more particularly addressed to the Princess Royal, “Three Visions occasioned by the Birth and Christening of the Prince of Wales,” and some “Lines on the Birth of the Princess Alice” (which occurred on the 25th of April, 1843), appeared in due succession. But the poetical interregnum came to an end in the spring of 1843, when, owing to the death of Southey, Wordsworth succeeded to the post; and the volunteer lyrist was heard no more on such topics. His few courtly poems are singularly pervaded by that profound faith in the speedy coming of a kind of golden age of peace, wisdom, health, gentleness, and universal prosperity, which characterised the earlier years of the present century, and especially the mind of Leigh Hunt, but which, in the disappointments and gathering melancholy of the present day, wears an aspect at once mournful and tender. The conclusion of the poem to the Princess Alice is worth quoting, because of the sad failure of its aspiration, combined with its remarkable truthfulness in other respects. Still harping on that wondrous age of human perfection which seems as far off as ever, the poet exclaims:—

“Thee, meantime, fair child of one
Fit to see that golden sun,
Thee may no worse lot befall
Than a long life, April all;
Fuller, much, of hopes than fears,
Kind in smiles and kind in tears,
Graceful, cheerful, ever new,
Heaven and earth both kept in view,
While the poor look up, and bless
Thy celestial bounteousness.
And, when all thy days are done,
And sadness views thy setting sun,
Mayst thou greet thy mother’s eyes,
And endless May in Paradise.”

Shortly after the birth of the Princess Alice the Queen wrote to the King of the Belgians:—“Albert has been, as usual, all kindness and goodness. Our little baby is to be called Alice, an old English name, and the other names are to be Maud (another old English name, and the same as Matilda), and Mary, as she was born on Aunt Gloucester’s birthday. The sponsors are to be the King

of Hanover, Ernestus Primus (now the Duke of Coburg), poor Princess Sophia Matilda, and Feodore; and the christening [is] to be on the 2nd of June." The ceremony went off very well; but the King of Hanover arrived too late to be present. In after years the Princess Alice became the wife of the Grand Duke of Hesse, and was well known for her intelligent benevolence and charity. She died on the 14th of December, 1878.

Unfettered by indirect influences, the Government of Sir Robert Peel was



LOBBY OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

now acquiring the confidence of the country by the masterly way in which its chief handled the great questions of the hour. One of the first things to be dealt with was the financial deficit left by the Whigs, which had reached the alarming total of more than ten millions for the previous six years. This was met by the creation of an Income Tax of sevenpence in the pound; and in the memorable statement which Sir Robert Peel made to the House of Commons on the 11th of March, 1842, a confident expectation was held out that the proceeds of such an impost would not merely fill up the deficit, but yield a surplus such as would enable the Ministry to reduce the taxes on commodities to an immense extent. All incomes below £150 were to be exempt from the new, or

rather the revived, tax; but no distinction was made between the precarious income resulting from trades, professions, and employments, and that derived from the much more assured source of landed and other property. This was regarded by the professional and mercantile classes as an injustice; but though the tax was not popular, most persons were compelled to admit that they saw no other way out of the difficulty. Sir Robert Peel argued that the maximum of indirect taxation had been reached, and that to accumulate further duties on the necessities and luxuries of life would be productive of the greatest injury to trade, while to reduce them would operate as a stimulus to manufactures and to commerce. If, then, indirect taxation was shut out by the very circumstances of the case, a tax on income was all that remained. Such an impost, amounting to no less than ten per cent. on the income of the country, was cheerfully borne during the war with Bonaparte; yet people thought it hard that, with no war at all, they were to be subjected to the same vexatious demand, though at the much lower rate of something less than three per cent. It was understood at the time that the tax was not to last beyond three, or at the most five, years; but in fact it has never been taken off to this day, though varying in amount from time to time. We must never forget, however, that its existence, unpleasant and objectionable as it is in some respects, has enabled successive Governments to remove many millions of taxation, which hampered trade, and seriously enhanced the price of necessities. In the year now passing under notice (1842), Sir Robert Peel reduced the Customs duties on 750 out of 1,200 articles, and entirely abolished the duties on some minor foreign commodities. The reduction of indirect taxation in the ensuing three years was about £12,000,000.

While thus opening a new and in many ways better prospect to the country, the Premier still clung to Protectionist measures with regard to foreign corn. On the 9th of February—a month before the introduction of the new Tariff—he brought forward his Sliding Scale, by which the duties on foreign wheat, oats, and barley, rose or fell according to the cheapness or dearness of what was grown at home. The arrangement gave satisfaction to no one. Mr. Cobden and his followers would accept nothing but absolute freedom of trade; the landed proprietors were content with nothing short of absolute Protection; and between these two extremes were the Whigs, who preferred—for the present, at least—the low fixed duty which they had proposed the year before. Nevertheless, Peel carried his Sliding Scale, for he had a good party vote at his back. The members of the Anti-Corn-Law League, however, had the greatest cause for rejoicing, for it was evident that matters were moving in the direction of Free Trade. People began to talk of the Corn Laws as doomed, and even Sir Robert Peel, in his speech of March 11th, when introducing his Tariff proposals, observed:—"I believe that on the general principle of Free Trade there is now no great difference of opinion, and that all agree in the general rule that we should purchase in the cheapest market, and sell in the dearest." He still held

back from applying this rule to corn; but no one could doubt how his mind was tending, and some four years later he began that beneficent course of Free Trade legislation which Liberal Governments afterwards perfected. The Leaguers acquired fresh spirit from the prospect of approaching triumph, and renewed meetings were held, both in London and the provinces.

In the early part of 1843 a very painful incident occurred, which excited the liveliest sympathy of the Queen and Prince Albert, and which for a time seemed to place the life of Sir Robert Peel in jeopardy. On the 20th of January, a man named Daniel McNaughten shot Mr. Edward Drummond, the private secretary of the Premier, as he was passing along Whitehall between the Admiralty and the Horse Guards. The unfortunate gentleman expired on the 25th of the same month, and some were found to maintain that the fatal issue was due more to the bleeding ordered by his medical attendants than to the effects of the pistol-shot. However this may have been, it is certain that the practice of phlebotomy decreased shortly after this melancholy event, and has never since regained the position it once held in medical practice. McNaughten, on being seized, and conveyed to the nearest police-station, declared that the Tories had been persecuting him for many years, and that that was his justification for committing the act. From this expression, and some others to which he gave utterance, it was inferred that his intention was to shoot Sir Robert Peel, and that he mistook Mr. Drummond for the First Minister, to whom the secretary seems to have borne some slight resemblance. The public mind was much excited by what appeared to be a deliberate attempt to make the head of the Government personally responsible for a supposed, and doubtless an imaginary, wrong. Taken in conjunction with the recent attacks upon the Queen, the crime was thought by many to reveal a widespread conspiracy against the deepest principles of social order, and the alarm in Court circles, and amongst the members of the Administration, was naturally very great. Of course there was exaggeration in this feeling; matters were not really so bad as they appeared. But for some time it was considered necessary that Sir Robert Peel should be guarded by policemen in plain clothes, and measures were taken to protect the Court. Alluding to the assassination in a letter to King Leopold, dated January 31st, the Queen observes:—"Poor Drummond is universally regretted. Indeed, I seldom remember so strong an interest (beginning with ourselves) being taken in, and so much feeling so generally shown towards, a private individual. People can hardly think of anything else. I trust it will have the beneficial effect of making people feel the difference between complete madness, which deprives a man of *all* sense, and madness which does *not* prevent a man from knowing right from wrong." This distinction does not seem to have been present to the minds of the jury before whom McNaughten was tried early in March. They returned a verdict that the prisoner was "Not guilty, on the ground of insanity;" and he was ordered to be kept in confinement during her Majesty's pleasure. The public, however, were greatly



"REBECCA" RIOT IN SOUTH WALES. (See p. 138)

discontented with this finding; and the general question, as to what was to be considered the standard of irresponsible mania, was submitted to the whole of the Judges, who were desired to answer the question, "If a person under an insane delusion as to existing facts commits an offence in consequence thereof, is he thereby excused?" The answer was given on the 19th of July, 1843,



LORD ASHLEY (AFTERWARDS EARL OF SHAFTESBURY).

when an unanimous opinion was pronounced, that he was equally liable with the person of sane mind.

Lady Peel was made very ill by the terrible event of January; and the habitual equanimity of Sir Robert himself underwent some disturbance. This was seen on the 16th of February, during the debate on Lord Howick's motion for a Committee of the whole House to consider the reference in the Queen's Speech at the opening of Parliament (February 2nd) to the long-continued depression of manufacturing industry. In the course of the discussion, Mr. Cobden said that he held Sir Robert Peel personally responsible for the existing lamentable and dangerous state of affairs. The words were not well chosen; but the Premier, who was out of health at the time, and suffering from anxiety

and sorrow, passionately leapt to the conclusion that Mr. Cobden was uttering a thinly-veiled incentive to his assassination. The distinguished Free Trader denied the imputation, received a direct contradiction from his adversary, and ultimately explained, in the midst of great confusion, that what he meant was that the right honourable Baronet was responsible by virtue of his office. The time was one of abnormal excitement, and great allowance must be made both for Peel and Cobden, but especially for the former. Only a few weeks later, Mr. Goulburn, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, applied at Bow Street Police Office for a warrant to arrest a retired officer of the navy, who had threatened to shoot him.

The unsettled condition of the country was shown by some disturbances which occurred about this time in South Wales. The small farmers in that portion of the Principality complained much of the heavy road-taxes which had been recently imposed. The tolls were often so onerous as to absorb the profit arising from the commodities which these humble people took to market. A number of gates had been set up, which were generally believed to be beyond the provisions of the law; and as these were destroyed with impunity, many people resolved to make a crusade against *all* toll-gates, wheresoever they might be found. In a wild and thinly-peopled country like Wales, authority is necessarily weak; and the conspirators against the gates were able to carry out their projects with less interference than would have been encountered in many other parts of the island. But it was considered advisable that these operations should take place after dark, and the winter of 1842-3 was rendered memorable by a series of successful attacks upon the toll-bars, attended by circumstances which were at once picturesque and alarming. The leader of the movement called himself "Rebecca," from a strange misapplication of a passage in Genesis, and dressed himself in women's clothes. Several of his followers were similarly disguised, and those who preserved their proper character as men wore masks over their faces. In the middle of the night the toll-keepers were aroused by a disorderly mob, armed with guns, and bearing torches, saws, and hatchets. Not only were the gates cut down and thrown on the adjacent land, but the toll-houses also were destroyed, and the occupants obliged to finish their night's rest, if they could finish it at all, in the open field, or on the bleak hill-side. So general was the support given to these rioters that the police and soldiery were frequently baffled in their endeavours to come up with them. But at first no personal outrages were committed. Unfortunately, however, a much worse spirit afterwards set in. Some Chartist emissaries were sent into South Wales; political ideas, having reference to the abolition of tithes, of Church rates, and of the existing Poor Law, were mixed up with the original objects of the association; and in the autumn of 1843 incendiarism and murder marked the progress of this disorderly band. At the same period, however, the gang were severely handled by the military; and when some exemplary punishments had been passed upon the principal rioters, a more lawful state of mind began to set

in. The Government, on the other hand, showed a disposition to leniency, and in the following year an amended Turnpike Act for South Wales removed the grievances which had been the original excuse for the outbreak.

The greatest sufferers are usually silent; it is others who discover their miseries, bring them into the light of day, and procure their amendment. Such was the case with the workers in mines and collieries, an inquiry into whose state was conducted by a Commission, whose report was published in the early part of 1842. It appeared from this report that, in some of the coal-mines, women and girls were employed as beasts of burden. By means of a chain passing between the legs, and connected with a belt strapped round their waists, they were compelled to drag to and fro, on hands and knees, and often for fourteen or sixteen hours a day, trucks heavily laden with coal, through passages too low to permit of these persons going upright. They were nearly naked, their clothing consisting of nothing more than a pair of trousers made of sacking. Their bodies were encrusted with the grime of the coal-dust, and many were completely unsexed, and presented chests that were as flat as those of men. By far the greater part of their lives was passed underground, in the black and cavernous recesses of the mine; and the morality of these unhappy creatures was equal to their physical degradation. Children were also employed, and treated with even greater brutality. Overworked and beaten by their cruel taskmasters, these children grew up stunted and diseased, and it was evident that nothing but widespread ruin, both of body and soul, could result from a system so monstrously opposed to all the laws of nature. The statesman who procured the Commission of Inquiry was Lord Ashley, afterwards still more famous as Earl of Shaftesbury; and it was he who subsequently introduced and carried the Mines and Collieries Act, by which women and girls were forbidden to be employed in any form of mining or colliery labour, and the employment of boys was not to be permitted under the age of ten years. Moreover, the term of apprenticeship was limited, and the Secretary of State was empowered to appoint Inspectors of Mines and Collieries, that the provisions of the Bill should not be evaded by those interested in defeating them. The Act was passed in 1842, but did not come into operation until 1843. Its effect was unquestionably good; yet it was found difficult to restrain many women from continuing the work to which they had been accustomed, and which perhaps they could not readily exchange for anything better. The Mines and Collieries Act was a measure in which we may be certain that the Queen, as a woman and a mother, took the deepest interest, and it is equally beyond question that the benevolent and clear-seeing mind of Prince Albert was also enlisted on behalf of sufferers of so peculiar and helpless an order.

It was at this time that great attention began to be paid to social as apart from political questions. Lord Ashley devoted a good deal of pains to effecting a limitation of the daily labour of women and young persons in factories. He ultimately obtained from the Government, in 1844, a Factories Act which threw

some protection around children who had previously been employed to an extent, and for a number of successive hours, terribly injurious to their physical and moral health. It was the desire of Sir James Graham, the Home Secretary, to engraft upon this Bill certain provisions for the education of young persons engaged in the large manufacturing establishments of the country; but, owing to the opposition of the Dissenters, who feared that the influence of the Church would be unduly extended, it was found necessary to abandon the proposed clauses. Even with respect to the main objects of the Bill, there was considerable opposition; for the bigoted adherents of political economy would not tolerate a measure which interfered with what they regarded as the right of contract between the employers and the employed. Their principle was doubtless a good one in the main; but children are so much under the influence of others that some departure from the rule was necessary in their case, especially as it was well known that the evil and the suffering were great. The more bitter opponents of Lord Ashley argued that he ought to look nearer home; that the peasantry on his father's estates, to which in due course he would succeed, were in a worse condition than the female and juvenile operatives in the factories; that the aristocratic reformer knew nothing about manufacturing life; and that in truth there was not much to complain of. But the fact that the agricultural labourers on the lands of Lord Ashley's father were poor and miserable, was no reason why Lord Ashley should not interest himself in another class of sufferers; while, as to the condition of the children in the seats of manufacturing industry, there could be no question, to any impartial mind, that it was such as to render the interposition of the law imperatively necessary. The general principle has since been extended in many other Acts of Parliament, even to the protection of women; and the bitter opposition of former times has become less and less. It is now admitted that special circumstances call for special legislation; that care for the young has even yet been insufficiently carried out; and that to sacrifice tender lives to economical theories is little better than to repeat in another form the Hindoo worship of Juggernaut. Some slight extension of the time devoted to education was introduced into the Act of 1844, in place of the more complete provision which it was originally intended to make; and the effect of this arrangement was found to be good, though a still further application of the system would unquestionably have been better.

As the session of 1843 advanced, the Queen and Prince Albert conceived a yet higher opinion of the great qualities exhibited by Sir Robert Peel. Her Majesty described him to the King of the Belgians as "a man who thinks but little of party, and never of himself." The Prince, with his remarkable keenness of judgment, anticipated that it would not be long ere Peel would quit the Conservative party, or the Conservatives, in the main, would desert him. In a Memorandum of Mr. Anson's, dated April 30th, 1843, we read:—"The Prince said yesterday, that Sir Robert Peel was certainly far from popular with the Conservative party. He, for his part, had the greater confidence in Sir Robert

for the very cause to which he attributed the want of confidence with which his party regarded him. It was that Sir Robert was determined to adopt his own line, and not to be turned aside by the fear of making political enemies, or losing support. He was determined either to stand or fall by his own opinion; and the Prince felt that in such a man's hands the interests of the Crown were most secure." In little more than three years it was seen that Peel did in truth "fall" by devotion to what he considered necessary to the well-being of the



WESTMINSTER HALL.

country. By his conversion to Free Trade he lost the support of the Conservative party, and was expelled from office by a combination which placed him at a hopeless disadvantage. That he would once more have risen to the head of affairs, had not an accident cut short his life, cannot be doubted; but, with the change of Ministry in 1846, his official existence came to a close.

The state of her health precluded the Queen from opening Parliament in person on the 2nd of February, 1843, and for the same reason she was unable to hold the usual spring levees. These were accordingly held by Prince Albert, as the representative of her Majesty; but some members of the Court were so much annoyed at the arrangement, which they regarded as an unwarrantable

assumption of Royal functions by the Prince, that they absented themselves from these ceremonial gatherings. The speedy recovery of the sovereign after the birth of the Princess Alice soon enabled her Majesty to occupy once more her proper position at the head of the Court, and the general opinion of the public was quite in favour of the step which had been temporarily adopted. This left Prince Albert free to devote himself with the greater application to his duties as head of the Royal Commission on the Fine Arts, which had been appointed with reference to the decoration of the new Houses of Parliament. In the summer of 1843, several cartoons, on subjects illustrative of English History and Poetry, were exhibited in Westminster Hall, and prizes were offered for the best productions. The collection excited great interest, and large numbers of persons thronged the magnificent old structure, to scan the designs submitted by the competitors. Those which were ultimately selected have been executed in fresco for the two Houses; but, owing either to climate, or to a bad preparation of the colours, or to both causes combined, these fine works have greatly decayed during the short period since their execution. Prince Albert took a keen interest in fresco-painting, and caused a summer-house in the garden of Buckingham Palace to be decorated in this manner. The result was a series of eight pictures in illustration of Milton's "Comus." The artists were Sir Edwin Landseer, Maclise, Uwins, Eastlake, Leslie, Sir William Ross, Dyce, and Stanfield; and the progress of their work was closely watched by her Majesty and the Prince. Mr. Uwins, in a letter to a friend, written on the 15th of August, 1843, gives a very interesting account of the impression produced on his mind by the Queen and her gifted consort. "The Queen," he observes, "is full of intelligence, her observations very acute, and her judgment apparently matured beyond her age. It has happened to me in life to see something of many Royal personages, and I must say, with the single exception of the Duke of Kent, I have never met with any, either in England or on the Continent of Europe, who have impressed me so favourably as our reigning sovereign and her young and interesting husband. Coming to us twice a day, unannounced and without attendants, entirely stripped of all State and ceremony, courting conversation, and desiring rather reason than obedience, they have gained our admiration and love. . . . Our peaceful pursuits are in accordance with the scene; and the opportunity of watching our proceedings seems to give a zest to the enjoyment of these moments snatched from State parade and ceremony. Here, too, the Royal children are brought out by their nurses, and the whole arrangement seems like real domestic pleasure."

On the 28th of August—the very day after the prorogation of Parliament—the Queen and Prince Albert embarked at Southampton, to spend a short time with the King of the French, who was staying at Château d'Eu, near Tréport. The voyagers sailed in their new yacht, *Victoria and Albert*, which was only just finished, but of which we have heard much in later years. For a couple of days they cruised about the Isle of Wight, and along the coast of Devonshire, and

then, crossing the Channel, arrived at Tréport on the evening of September 2nd. Louis Philippe came off in his barge to welcome the distinguished visitors, and was accompanied by several members of his family, by M. Guizot, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, by Lord Cowley, the English Ambassador at Paris, and by several officers and others. The English party were rowed ashore in the French barge, over which the Royal Standards of France and England floated in genial companionship. The reception of the Queen was such as almost to overpower her with emotion, and the whole visit appears to have yielded her Majesty the deepest satisfaction. The determination of the Queen and Prince Albert to cross over to France appears to have been unknown to the English Ministers until shortly before the time of starting. There were, of course, some rumours of such an intention; but even in the highest quarters they were disbelieved. In his "Journal," published in 1857, Mr. Raikes asserts that the whole affair "was a wily intrigue, managed by Louis Philippe through the intervention of his daughter, the Queen of the Belgians, during her frequent visits to Windsor with King Leopold, and was hailed by him with extreme joy, as the first admission of the King of the Barricades within the pale of legitimate sovereigns." The Duke of Wellington observed to Mr. Raikes, "I was never let into the secret, nor did I believe the report then in circulation, till at last they sent to consult my opinion as to forming a Regency during the Queen's absence. I immediately referred to precedents as the only proper guide. I told them that George I., George II. (George III. never went abroad), and George IV., had all been obliged to appoint Councils of Regency; that Henry VIII., when he met Francis I. at Ardres, was then master of Calais, as also when he met Charles V. at Gravelines; so that, in these instances, Calais being a part of his dominions, he hardly did more than pass his frontier—not much more than going from one county to the next. Upon this I decided that the Queen could not quit this country without an Act of Regency. But she consulted the Crown lawyers, who decided that it was not necessary." In days like our own, when the Government of the country is substantially conducted by the Queen's responsible Ministers, a Council of Regency, if the sovereign is to be absent only a few days, seems entirely unnecessary. The most questionable part of the visit to France in 1843 was the secrecy in which it was involved until shortly before the time of departure.

The Queen's stay in France, which lasted not more than five days, terminated on the 7th of September. Although courtly writers give one to understand that the only object of the Queen and Prince Albert was to make the personal acquaintance of the French King and his family, with whom they had long maintained cordial relations through the medium of correspondence, it is evident that at least one matter of politics was discussed between the two sovereigns and their Ministers. Louis Philippe was known to entertain a design to marry one of his sons to the Queen of Spain, or to a Spanish Princess, in the hope of renewing that connection between the two countries which has long been an alluring dream of French diplomacy. The project was regarded in England with



THE QUEEN'S VISIT TO FRANCE. (See p. 143.)

the utmost disfavour, and somewhat strained relations had ensued. On her visit to France, the Queen was accompanied by her Foreign Minister, the Earl of Aberdeen, and the matter was talked over by her Majesty, Prince Albert, and Lord Aberdeen, on the one hand, and the French monarch and M. Guizot on the other. In a letter to Baron Stockmar, written shortly after the return to England, Prince Albert states :—"Little passed of a political nature, except



THE EARL OF ABERDEEN.

the declaration of Louis Philippe to Aberdeen that he would not give his son to Spain, even if he were asked ; and Aberdeen's answer, that, excepting one of his sons, any aspirant whom Spain might choose would be acceptable to England." We know now that the French King's promise was shamefully broken a few years later ; but there was no reason at the time to disbelieve his word. England was not unnaturally disquieted by the prospect of an alliance between France and Spain ; France, with equal reason, objected to the Queen of Spain marrying a Prince of the House of Coburg, which was the idea favoured by the English Court. Accordingly, a compromise was arranged by Lord Aberdeen and M. Guizot, when it was settled that the French King should renounce all pretensions

on the part of any of his sons to the hand of the Queen of Spain; that the sovereign of that country should choose her husband from the descendants of Philip V., so as equally to exclude the Coburgs; and that, as regarded the contemplated marriage of the Duc de Montpensier, youngest son of Louis Philippe, with the Infanta Donna Maria Louisa, sister of the Queen of Spain, no such union should take place till the Queen was married, and had had children; in consideration of which promise, the Queen of England waived all objections to the marriage of Montpensier. The whole transaction seems to have been rather irregular; for negotiations of this nature are generally conducted between Cabinet and Cabinet, acting, of course, through their respective Foreign Ministers. In the present instance, however, the Queen's visit was kept secret as long as possible, and the negotiation was then settled by Lord Aberdeen and M. Guizot quietly talking it over in a French château. The English visitors seem to have been effectually blinded and lulled to sleep by the wily courtesies of the French monarch; and we have the authority of Prince Albert that Lord Aberdeen was "thoroughly satisfied with everything, and made himself much liked." A few years later, he made himself "much liked" in Russia, with which country we were about to go to war on questions of gravity and moment. But for the present no one perceived how cleverly we had been tricked, and Lord Brougham wrote effusively to Prince Albert about "the admirable effects produced by the late excursion to France, and the sure tendency of this wise measure to create the best feelings between the two nations." The Prince himself believed that such would be the case; yet, the very next year, a war between France and England became imminent.

On returning from France, her Majesty and the Prince made a short stay at Brighton, and then started for Belgium on a visit to King Leopold. Leaving Brighton in the Royal yacht on the 12th of September, they arrived at Ostend on the 13th, and, after a six days' tour in Belgium, during which Bruges, Ghent, Brussels, and Antwerp were visited, returned to Windsor Castle on the 21st of September. "The old cities of Flanders," writes Prince Albert to Baron Stockmar, "had put on their fairest array, and were very tastefully decorated with tapestries, flowers, trees, pictures, &c., which, combined with the numerous old monuments, churches, and convents, and the gay crowds of people, produced a most peculiar effect. Victoria was greatly interested and impressed; and the cordiality and friendliness which met us everywhere could not fail to attract her towards the Belgian people." The travels of the Royal couple were now over for a time, and on the 25th of October Prince Albert accompanied the Queen to Cambridge, where his Royal Highness received the degree of Doctor of Civil Law. Both were greeted with marked cordiality, and the Queen afterwards wrote with much satisfaction of the enthusiasm shown by all classes at that famous University, and particularly by the undergraduates. In a letter dated the 4th of November, Professor Sedgwick gave a lively account of the visit paid by the Royal party to the Woodwardian Museum. "The Queen," he said,



PRINCE ALBERT HUNTING NEAR BELVOIR CASTLE.

“seemed happy and well pleased, and was mightily taken with one or two of my monsters, especially with the Plesiosaurus and gigantic stag. The subject was new to her; but the Prince evidently had a good general knowledge of the old world, and not only asked good questions, and listened with great courtesy to all I had to say, but in one or two instances helped me on by pointing to the rare things in my collection, especially in that part of it which contains the German fossils. I thought myself very fortunate in being able to exhibit the finest collection of German fossils to be seen in England. They fairly went the round of the Museum; neither of them seemed in a hurry, and the Queen was quite happy to hear her husband talk about a novel subject with so much knowledge and spirit. He called her back once or twice to look at a fine impression of a dragon-fly which I have in the Solenhofen slate. Having glanced at the long succession of our fossils, from the youngest to the oldest, the party again moved into the lecture-room.” The visit to Cambridge lasted only three days, and on the 28th of October the Royal party were back at Windsor.

In the latter days of November, the Queen and Prince Albert visited Sir Robert Peel at Drayton Manor, the country seat of that statesman. While staying here, the Prince made a visit to Birmingham on the 20th of the month. Owing to the turbulent character of that town, where the principles of Chartism were in the ascendant, and riots had occurred but recently, Sir James Graham and some members of the Government considered it imprudent for his Royal Highness to venture into such a vortex of extravagant opinions. The Prince, however, was not unaware that his greatest enemies were to be found rather in the upper and official circles than among the populace; and he therefore did not fear throwing himself upon the hospitality of the Birmingham people. “The Mayor, who accompanied the Prince in the carriage,” wrote Mr. Anson on the same day, “is said to be a Chartist, and to hold extreme views. He said that the visit had created the greatest enthusiasm;—that it had brought into unison and harmony opposite political parties, who had shown the deepest hatred towards each other; and that it had been productive of the happiest results in Birmingham. He also said he would vouch for the devoted loyalty of the whole Chartist body. The Queen had not more loyal subjects in her dominions.” From Drayton Manor, the Royal party proceeded to Chatsworth, the seat of the Duke of Devonshire, and afterwards to Belvoir Castle, belonging to the Duke of Rutland. In the Belvoir neighbourhood, the Prince distinguished himself in the hunting-field, though he had no great inclination for that kind of sport. It had been thought that his Royal Highness, as a scholar, and a man much given to retirement, was scarcely possessed of sufficient spirit to face the perils of the chase. He had therefore fallen a good deal in the estimation of men who consider that the larger part of human virtue is comprised in the ability to preserve a good seat on horseback, and to clear a five-barred gate with complete indifference as to what may be on the other side. His performances in the vicinity of Belvoir Castle completely re-established him in the estimation of

these persons, and, as Baron Stockmar afterwards observed, such a reputation was not without practical value while fox-hunting continued to be an English national pursuit. The Prince rode boldly and well, and, while some others were thrown, kept his saddle to the last.

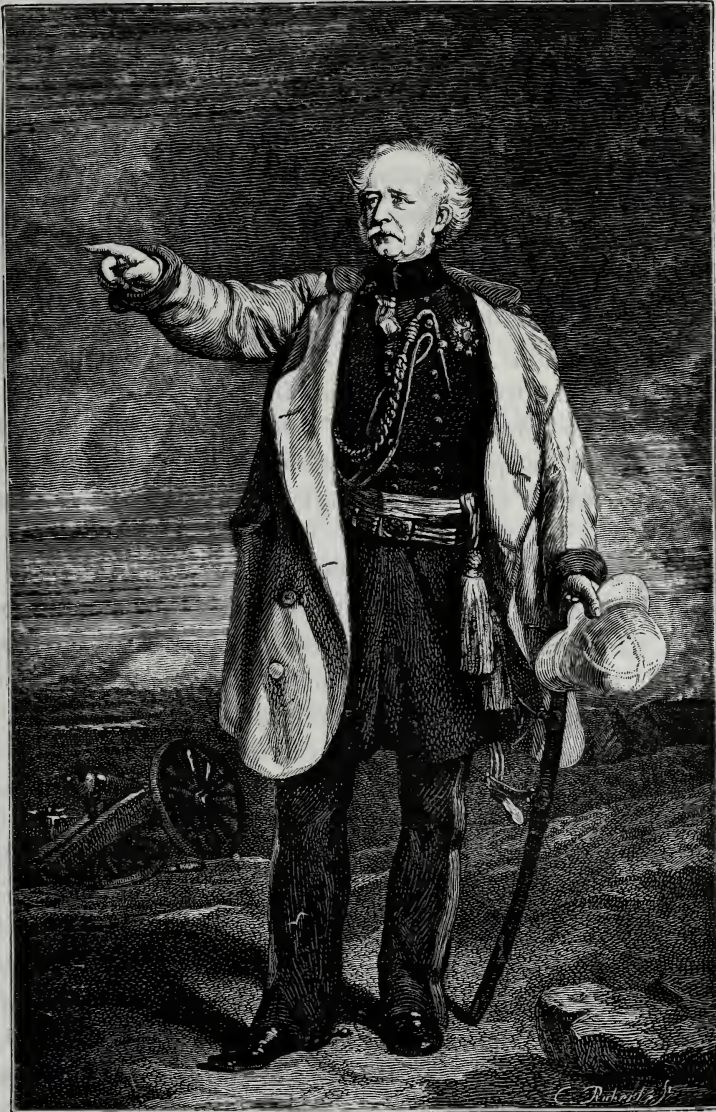
One of the favourite studies of Prince Albert was that of agriculture—a science which he found in a very backward state in England, and which he did much to improve. The growing of crops and the rearing of live stock engaged



CHATSWORTH HOUSE, FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.

much of his attention, and he established a model farm in Windsor Park, which showed how much may be effected by intelligent supervision, and a systematic application of those scientific principles which modern times have placed at the disposal of enterprising men. At the chief agricultural shows, his name soon became familiar as a constant and often successful exhibitor, and nothing gave him greater pleasure than any notable achievement in this field of human industry. Speaking of the model works in Windsor Park, a contemporary writer observed that “the most practical man could not go that pleasant round, from the Flemish farm to the Norfolk, and so back again by the Home and the Dairy, without learning something wherever he went.” The farm at Windsor was established about the end of 1840, and the Prince always took the greatest

interest in the working of his establishment. On the 30th of October, 1843, he wrote to Baron Stockmar that the prices of cattle were up again, and that he had netted a very good return from his auction in the Park. Since the death



LORD GOUGH. (After the Portrait by Sir Francis Grant, P.R.A.)

of his Royal Highness, the farm has been continued with equal zeal by the Queen; and the Prince of Wales has also shown an intelligent interest in pursuits and experiments calculated to raise in no slight degree the productive powers of our country.

While the Queen was gaining a more extended knowledge of her home

dominions, and Prince Albert was interesting himself in many departments of science and art, some events were passing in India, to which brief reference should be made. During the Afghan war of 1838-9, the Anglo-Indian Government intimated its intention to take temporary possession of Shikarpoor, in Scinde, an independent State in the north-west of the Peninsula. The Ameers of Hyderabad and Mizpoor thereupon assented to a treaty which placed them under the control of Calcutta; but the people themselves never agreed to this sacrifice, and the British Residency at Hyderabad was attacked in the early part of 1843. Hereupon, the British envoy, Sir Charles James Napier, marched a large military force against the malcontents, routed them at Meeanee on the 17th of February, and, by a further victory on March 24th, completed the subjugation of Scinde. During the next two years, the country continued in a state of extreme agitation, owing to the depredations of certain marauding tribes in the west; but these brigands were hunted down, and at length entirely extirpated, by the conqueror of Scinde, whose unrelenting energy and fiery resolution procured from him, from his half-admiring adversaries, the title of "the Devil's Brother." The administration of the province has greatly improved since then; but it may be questioned whether its annexation was not an act of high-handed power, which the concomitant circumstances were insufficient to justify.

In the latter part of the same year, another war broke out in Asia. The State of Gwalior, situated in Central India, had been under our protection since 1803; but the death of the native sovereign, in 1843, produced a degree of anarchy which led to the interposition of the British Government. Lord Ellenborough made a public announcement that he could "neither permit the existence of an unfriendly Government with the territories of Scindia" (the reigning family in that part of Hindostan), "nor that those territories should be without a Government capable of coercing its own subjects." This was on the 20th of December; on the 29th, the army of Gwalior, under the command of Sir Hugh Gough, Commander-in-Chief, and in presence of the Governor-General, defeated the native forces at Maharajpoor. On the same day, the left wing of the army, under Major-General Grey, defeated the enemy at Punniar; and the strong fort of Gwalior, sometimes called "the Gibraltar of the East," was taken by our soldiers. By a treaty concluded in January, 1844, the native dynasty was permitted to retain 9,000 troops of its own, in addition to a large contingent under British authority; and Gwalior still preserves a certain amount of independence, though strictly under the supervision of the Anglo-Indian Government.

CHAPTER IX.

IRELAND, RUSSIA, AND FRANCE.

O'Connell and the Agitation for Repeal of the Union—Early Life of the Agitator—Character of his Oratory—Question as to the Purity of his Motives—The “Repeal Year” (1843)—Methods by which O'Connell worked on Irish Opinion—Open-air Gatherings on the Repeal Question—Extravagant Speeches of O'Connell—Crowning of the Liberator on the Hill of Tara—Prohibition of a proposed Meeting at Clontarf—Arrest of the Chief Agitators—Trial, Condemnation, and Sentences—The Convictions annulled by the House of Lords—Release of O'Connell, and Final Years of his Life—Effect of the Prosecution on the Government of Sir Robert Peel—Death of Prince Albert's Father—Visit of the Prince to Saxe-Coburg-Gotha—His Presents to the Queen on her Birthday (1844)—Visits of the King of Saxony and the Emperor of Russia to England—Appearance and Manners of the Emperor—Political Objects of Nicholas in Visiting London—His Designs on Turkey—Memorandum of Agreement between the Czar and the English Government—Jealousy on the Part of the French—Ministerial Crisis in the Summer of 1844—Sir James Graham and the Opening of Letters at the Post Office—Disagreement with France with Respect to the Island of Tahiti—The Pritchard Affair—Queen Pomare and Queen Victoria—Anxieties of the English Court as to the Maintenance of Peace—The Ashburton Treaty with the United States.

IRELAND, always more or less disturbed, was excited nearly to the point of rebellion in 1843, owing to an agitation for the Repeal of the Union which had been originated by Daniel O'Connell, one of the most remarkable men of that epoch. O'Connell belonged to a good but impoverished family in Kerry, and was brought up as a lawyer. But Nature had designed him for little else than a political agitator, and the demand for Roman Catholic Emancipation, which began to acquire force in the early part of the present century, drew him into the whirlpool of public life. Whatever his faults and errors, he was unquestionably a devoted son of the Church to which he and his family belonged; and the Romanists of this realm suffered at that time from many unjust disabilities. In a few years he became the leader of the movement; and when the Act of 1829 was passed, O'Connell was regarded by the great mass of the Irish people as a hero who could always lead them to victory. When a very young man, he was opposed to the union of the English and Irish Legislatures, and in 1841 he renewed an earlier agitation in favour of repealing that arrangement. As long as the Whigs were in power, or nearly so, O'Connell kept the national excitement within reasonable bounds; for he hoped to extort a good deal from a party which depended on extraneous support, and he was prepared to take less than his full demand, in the belief that an instalment in one year would prepare the way for complete payment in another. But, when it became evident that Sir Robert Peel would soon be Prime Minister, it was considered that nothing could be obtained except by means of an agitation carried to the extreme verge of legality, and apparently, if not really, threatening to pass beyond it.

The aims of O'Connell were far more national than political. He was studying in France when the great Revolution broke out, and its horrors made such an impression on his mind that he returned to his own country “half a Tory at heart.” His views were never what might be called Radical or democratic.

though in many respects liberal ; but he was a consummate demagogue—that is to say, a man gifted with a marvellous capacity of exciting, swaying, and controlling the mobs which were at once the sources and the subjects of his power. To these results, his commanding figure, expressive countenance, and splendid voice, contributed not a little. It may be doubted if there has ever been so accomplished an agitator in the modern world : those of the ancient republics spoke to much smaller audiences. One secret of his success (so far as he can be said to have succeeded) lay in the complete harmony which existed between himself and the majority of the Irish people. His face declared him to be an unmixed Celt, of the Hibernian variety ; and not merely his face, but every throb of his nature. Passionate, impulsive, violent in thought and in expression, boastful, wayward, pathetic, and humorous, he drew from all these qualities a species of eloquence peculiarly suited to the audiences he addressed. In the open air, on a bleak hill-side, he would bring together thousands of half-barbarian peasantry, and play upon them, as a master plays upon an instrument. He had the almost unparalleled gift of stimulating his hearers to the very brink of some mad outbreak, and of restraining them at the last moment. It must be recorded to the credit of O'Connell that he always repudiated and condemned the resort to physical force, and that he did actually avoid it. Yet the turmoil he created was almost as distracting as civil war, and the gigantic failure of the Repeal movement was written in gloomy characters all over Ireland.

O'Connell had sat in the Imperial Parliament since 1829 ; and even in the House of Commons his fervid and headlong eloquence was often most impressive. But his greatest triumphs belonged, doubtless, to what may be called the platform order of oratory. The champion of Repeal had an unexampled command over the vocabulary of abuse ; though it must be admitted that some of his opponents were not far behind in this effective accomplishment. Not only was O'Connell in the habit of referring, in general terms, to “the base, brutal, and bloody Saxon” (by whom, it may be necessary to explain, he meant the English people), but he attacked particular individuals with a ferocity of invective which was frequently more ludicrous than terrible. Unquestionably he had some of the characteristics of a great orator ; yet his style was often tawdry, and his sentiment overwrought. Partly, perhaps, by virtue of these very characteristics, he acquired such an influence over the Roman Catholic Irish that there were but few things they would not have done, or abstained from doing, at a word from him. How far he was an honest man, is a subject which has been much disputed. It seems impossible to doubt that he loved his country, however imprudently ; but it is also very difficult not to believe that he loved himself quite as much. In order to carry on his agitation, he called for the formation of a fund which came to be termed the Repeal Rent, and which was derived almost entirely from the weekly contributions of the poverty-stricken cotters of Ireland. These payments went into the hands of the Liberator, as O'Connell was fondly called ; and it was asserted by many that the larger part was expended by him

on his own gratifications. His advocates defend him in this respect by saying that he gave up a magnificent practice at the bar for the sake of conducting the Repeal movement, and that therefore he had a moral claim to some other source of income. But this is surely making patriotism easy, and even pleasant, after a fashion never before dreamt of by patriots of exalted character. It would appear also that in some instances O'Connell wrung their contributions from



DANIEL O'CONNELL.

the peasantry by absolute coercion, and that his ordinary dealings with his own tenants were particularly bad, since he acted as a "Middleman," who appropriated three times as much rent as he paid to the head-landlord.* It is no answer to such statements to say that O'Connell died poor, for the Repeal Rent—long the chief source of his income—had dwindled to nothing for some few years before his death.

At the beginning of 1843, the *Liberator* declared that that year was and

* Harriet Martineau's *History of England during the Thirty Years' Peace*.

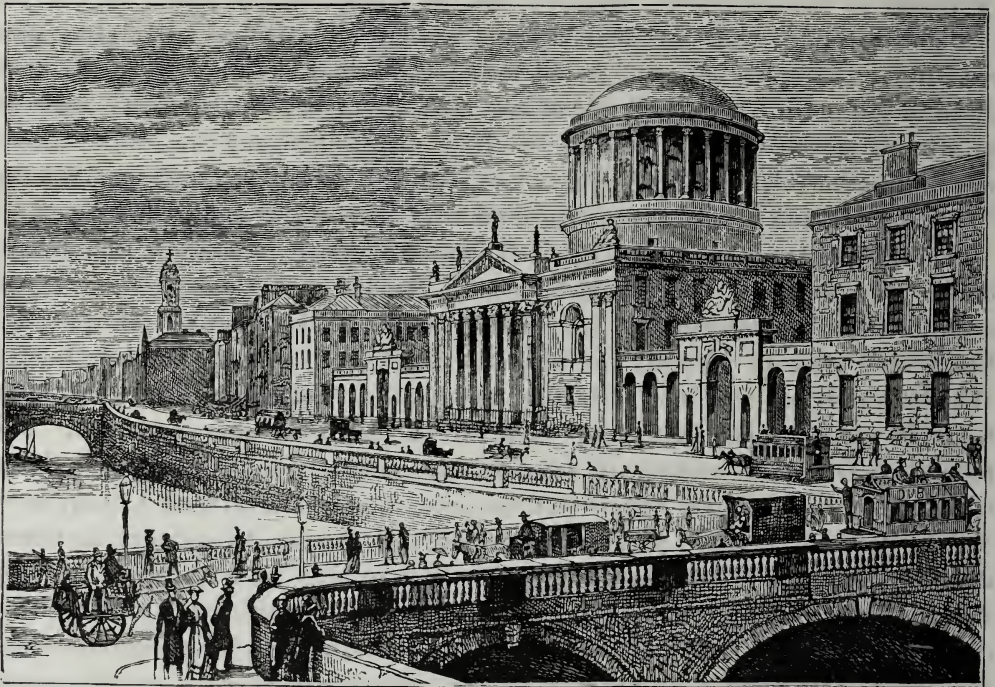
should be "the Repeal Year." He had for several months been endeavouring to strike a blow at British commerce by directing his followers to refuse all articles of British manufacture, and by setting an example in the garments which he himself wore. But this had very little effect; for the poor, who form the majority in Ireland, could not afford to indulge their national antipathies at the cost of higher-priced and probably inferior goods. It was therefore necessary to hold open-air meetings on a gigantic scale and in quick succession, though in 1843 the arch-agitator was about sixty-eight years of age. O'Connell not unfrequently touched on the land question which has given so much trouble in more recent times, and flattered Irish agriculturists with the hope of obtaining farms at no great sacrifice on their own parts. But the main object of his life, after the achievement of Roman Catholic Emancipation, was the passing of a measure for Repeal. The methods he pursued were sometimes not a little puzzling to English minds. While using language towards the British Parliament and the British people which looked like an indirect incentive to rebellion, notwithstanding its saving clauses, O'Connell would pour out the most flattering homage to the Queen; even prophesying that the time would come when her Majesty would gladly fly from her Tory enemies, and seek refuge among her faithful Irish—with a view, it would seem to have been implied, of ruling England from Ireland. All this nonsense pleased those who listened to it; but it was only so much byplay. The real agitation was far more serious; at one time it looked formidable. From the spring to the autumn of 1843, numerous meetings (generally on Sunday, that more might attend) were held in various parts of Ireland, at the bidding of O'Connell, and with the sanction of the priesthood of all grades. They were attended by enormous numbers, several of whom had marched, in a semi-military fashion, many miles from their homes. It is said that at some of these gatherings no fewer than a quarter of a million persons were present; and it was remarked as singular that, during the agitation, crime became almost extinct. This was partly due to the sweet, persuasive exhortations of the Apostle of Temperance, Father Mathew, who had recently produced a most remarkable effect in checking drunkenness in Ireland, and causing many thousands to take the pledge of total abstinence. But it must in some degree be ascribed to the fact that the minds of the humbler classes were occupied by serious thoughts of a political character, and influenced by an excitement which left room for no other. The exultation of passion had for a time superseded the insane fury of the whisky-bottle.

At the open-air meetings, the speeches of O'Connell were characterised by his most effective style of popular oratory. The unapproachable excellence of Ireland, the unexampled baseness and cruelty of England, were the themes on which he principally dwelt. All the miseries of his native land would be removed as soon as an Irish Parliament was once more sitting on College Green. That event would be brought about in not more than a year; and then the golden age of Ireland would begin. A good many picturesque but rather theatrical

accessories were introduced on these occasions. Banners, showy decorations, and exciting music, accompanied the march of the peasantry, and at an unusually large meeting on the hill of Tara—a spot where the ancient kings of Ireland used to be elected—O'Connell himself was crowned with a species of semi-regal cap. This was on the 15th of August: on the 8th of October, an immense meeting was to be held at Clontarf, three miles from Dublin. But the Government now thought that matters were proceeding to a dangerous length. They had already passed an Arms Act for Ireland, by which great restrictions were laid on the possession of deadly weapons; they had concentrated large bodies of troops in the disaffected country; and, by a proclamation issued on the 7th of October, they forbade the contemplated assemblage. It was certainly a wise resolution. In spite of his repeated declarations that nothing was to be done of an illegal nature, O'Connell had of late used several expressions well calculated to stir up an excitable people like the Irish to rebellion and civil war. There was unquestionably no slight danger of an outbreak, and it was high time for the “base, brutal, and bloody Saxon” to show that his patience had a limit.

Had the meeting been held, it is not improbable that a collision would have taken place between the populace and the soldiery. O'Connell, however, at once issued a proclamation of his own, declaring that the orders of the Lord Lieutenant must be obeyed, and that the people must return to their homes. Why the meeting was not forbidden by the Government until the very day before it was to be held, is a State secret which has never been explained. The people were already coming in from all the country round, and, as a large military force was massed together on the spot, it is wonderful that a sanguinary combat did not ensue. Some members of the Repeal Association stationed themselves on the roads approaching Clontarf to turn back as many as they could; but several arrived on the early morning of the 8th, and speedily found themselves between close lines of troops. The mandate of the Liberator, however, was obeyed with marvellous alacrity, and the meeting (such as it was) dispersed without any untoward event. The Government had at length done what it ought to have done before; and it was now resolved to take a further step—namely, to prosecute the chief agitator and his colleagues. O'Connell, his son, and eight others, were arrested on charges of conspiracy, sedition, and unlawful assembling. Nothing could exceed the dismay of the Liberator at the prospect which now opened before him. He issued addresses to the people, passionately exhorting them to observe the utmost forbearance and moderation, and seemed to consider that his pacific words would utterly obliterate the effect of the inflammatory language he had used only a few weeks before. In point of fact, they nearly obliterated himself. The Repeal Association broke up into two camps. One, consisting of the older members, clung to their accustomed leader; the other, composed of all the youthful and fiery spirits, formed a new combination, which was afterwards known as that of “Young Ireland,” and which openly declared its intention to rebel at the very earliest opportunity.

The proceedings against O'Connell and his associates commenced formally on the 2nd of November, 1843, in the Dublin Court of Queen's Bench; but the actual trial did not begin until the 16th of January, 1844. Owing, it would seem, to some error, the jury consisted entirely of Protestants, who, as a rule, were not likely to have much regard for the author of Roman Catholic Emancipation; but whether this circumstance, however unfortunate and objectionable, had any real effect upon the verdict, it would be somewhat dangerous to pronounce. The trial did not terminate until the 12th of February, nor was



THE FOUR COURTS, DUBLIN.

sentence passed before the 30th of May, 1844. With one exception, all the prisoners were found guilty, and sentences of varying severity were pronounced. O'Connell was condemned to one year's imprisonment, to pay a fine of £2,000, and to enter into security and recognisances, in the sum of £5,000, for his good behaviour during a term of seven years. The others were sentenced to nine months' imprisonment, together with a fine of £50, and were ordered to find securities for the same period as their leader, in the sum of £1,000. They were removed to the Richmond Penitentiary at Dublin. The Liberator issued a proclamation to the Irish people, commanding them to keep perfectly quiet; but at the same time he transmitted a writ of error to London, in order that the legality of the sentence might be reconsidered. The Lords, to whom the appeal was made, referred the matter to the twelve Judges; the Judges were not

agreed as to the technical points involved; and the question went back again to the Lords. The decision now rested with four Law Lords, three of whom



OLD PARLIAMENT HOUSE, DUBLIN.

—Lords Denman, Cottenham, and Campbell—voted that the judgment of the Irish Court should be reversed. The only dissident was Lord Brougham; but his single vote was, of course, inoperative. O'Connell, therefore, had gained a legal triumph, and he was released from prison in the midst of a popular ovation. The decision of the Lords was pronounced on the 4th of September,

by which time, O'Connell and his friends had already undergone a considerable portion of their imprisonment. They had been treated with great leniency, however, and O'Connell was allowed to see his admirers in jail to an extent which appears to have positively injured his health. Certain it is that he was never again the vigorous man he had been; but this result was probably owing in a much greater degree to disappointment, and humiliation of spirit. His power had passed away from him. Younger and more energetic men were taking his place; the English Government had shown its power to handle the agitator firmly; age was creeping upon him; and he did little more during the remainder of his days. In the latter part of 1846, his health and spirits were so completely broken that he could not endure any allusions to his beloved Ireland and her future. Early in 1847, he commenced a journey to Rome, where he desired to close his career in the very bosom of the Church to which he had always been attached. His mind was tortured by many painful memories, for in his earlier years his life had been open to reproach in more ways than one. An overmastering dread of death now came upon him, and one of his last fears was that he should be buried alive. His earnest desire to reach the Eternal City was denied him. He could get no farther than Genoa; and there he expired on the 15th of May, 1847, leaving behind him a great, but on the whole not a happy, reputation.

It was feared by many persons in England that the trial and conviction of O'Connell would raise such a tumult amongst the Irish party in the Legislature, and their Liberal allies, as to endanger the existence of the Government. This proved not to be the fact; but it was certainly a reasonable forecast, and it was the view formed by Baron Stockmar, who from his German home watched with interest the progress of events in England and Ireland. In a letter to Prince Albert, dated November 27th, 1843, he says:—"It is an old principle with me, to form no judgments at a distance upon matters which lie far away from my sphere of observation. Consequently, I can only express mere feelings in so far as personal matters are concerned. The news of the O'Connell trial took me by surprise, and threw me into an uneasy state of mind, that set me thinking, not so much what might ensue from a favourable or unfavourable issue to the prosecution, as what the Ministry are to do with their victory, supposing them to get one. To my thinking, victory is likely to prove more dangerous than failure; and apprehensions seized me, which I still entertain, that this trial may very possibly lead to a speedy termination of the Peel Ministry." Not only was this anticipation falsified, but the Government gained in strength from its virtual triumph over O'Connell. Measures of a really beneficial character to Ireland were passed about this period, and for a time the disaffection of the country underwent considerable abatement.

In the early part of 1844, a great affliction fell upon Prince Albert. His father died on the 29th of January, and, although such an event had been anticipated for some time past, the shock was none the less on that account.

The grief of the Queen was almost equal to the Prince's own, and a deep gloom settled down upon the Royal circle. On the 4th of February, Prince Albert wrote to Baron Stockmar:—"God will give us all strength to bear the blow becomingly. That we were separated gives it a peculiar poignancy. Not to see him, not to be present to close his eyes, not to help to comfort those he leaves behind, and to be comforted by them, is very hard. Here we sit together, poor Mamma, Victorie, and myself, and weep, with a great, cold public around us, insensible as stone. To have some true, sympathetic friend at hand would be a great solace. Come to us in this time of trouble, if come you can. . . . The world is assuredly not our true happiness; and, alas! every day's experience forces me to see how wicked men are. Every imaginable calumny is heaped upon us, especially upon me; and although a pure nature, conscious of its own high purposes, is and ought to be lifted above attacks, still it is painful to be misrepresented by people of whom one believed better things." On the 28th of March, the Prince left England for his father's small dominions, in order to assist his brother Ernest in commencing his duties as the reigning Duke. It was the first time that he and the Queen had ever been parted since their marriage, and both felt the separation acutely. Two days before the Prince's departure, the Queen of the Belgians reached Buckingham Palace, to spend a brief time with the English sovereign during the period of her solitude; and King Leopold himself arrived a few days later. On the 11th of April, the Prince was back again at Windsor. He records in his diary that he arrived at six o'clock in the evening, in the midst of "great joy."

The Queen's birthday was approaching even before the Prince left England; and the latter had already given orders for the preparation of two gifts to her Majesty, which he knew would be very acceptable. On the 5th of March, Prince Albert asked Mr. Eastlake, the painter, if he could execute by the 24th of May a little picture of angels, such as he had introduced into his fresco in the pavilion of Buckingham Palace Gardens. He promised to do the picture by the time mentioned, although he was already at work on one for her Majesty. The other present was a miniature portrait of the Prince himself, by Thorburn, taken in armour, in accordance with a wish frequently expressed by the Queen. The portrait is a full-length, and is said by her Majesty to give the Prince's real expression more than anything that she knew. "During the fatal illness, and on the last morning of his life," she writes on the 20th of December, 1873, "he was wonderfully like this picture." The lower part of the face was done in half an hour, and the whole character and aspect are extremely noble. The two pictures were presented to the Queen on her birthday, at Claremont, where the Royal couple were staying.

The King of Saxony was at this time expected at Buckingham Palace, and he arrived there on the 1st of June. Only two days before, her Majesty and the Prince had been somewhat surprised at hearing that the Emperor of Russia was on his way to visit the English Court, and that he might be looked for at almost

any moment. He reached London on the night of June 1st, and remained until the following morning at the Russian Embassy. Next day, he was brought by Prince Albert to Buckingham Palace, where he became the guest of her Majesty, though he again went to the Embassy at night, having resolved for the present not to occupy the apartments prepared for him at the Palace. On the 3rd of June, he was escorted by Prince Albert from the Slough Station to Windsor Castle, whither the Court had now removed.

The habits of this Northern potentate were in some respects remarkably simple and austere. All through his life, he slept on a leathern sack, stuffed with hay or straw. The sack thus filled was stretched upon a camp-bed, and the Emperor never intermitted this custom, even when on a visit to foreign Courts. He produced a very marked impression on the Queen and Prince Albert, and the former, writing to her uncle, the King of the Belgians, on the 4th. of June, observes of the Emperor:—"He is certainly a very striking man, still very handsome; his profile is beautiful, and his manners most dignified and graceful; extremely civil, quite alarmingly so, as he is so full of attention and *politesse*. But the expression of the eyes is severe, and unlike anything I ever saw before. He gives Albert and myself the impression of a man who is not happy, and on whom the burden of his immense power and position weighs heavily and painfully. He seldom smiles, and, when he does, the expression is not a happy one. He is very easy to get on with." Lady Lyttelton says in one of her letters:—"The only fault in his face is that he has pale eyelashes, and his enormous and very brilliant eyes have no shade; besides which, they have the awful look given by occasional glimpses of white above the eyeball, which comes from his father Paul, I suppose, and gives a savage wildness, for a moment, pretty often."

He and the King of Saxony were delighted with Windsor, and the Emperor said that the English Court was conducted on the noblest scale of any Court he had ever seen, everything being done without effort, and as if it were the ordinary condition of affairs. The Autocrat of the Russias abounded in gallant speeches to the British sovereign, and pleased her much by his high praises of Prince Albert. Her Majesty was at first a good deal opposed to the visit, seeming to entertain some vague feelings of apprehension on political grounds; but, after a few days, she conceived a sentiment of friendship for him, and in writing to King Leopold expressed her conviction that he was truthful and sincere. She did not regard him as very clever, and she saw that his mind was far from cultivated. The arts, which were so dear to her own husband, he regarded with entire want of interest, and confined his attention solely to politics and military affairs. He showed much alarm about the condition of the East, and professed the greatest anxiety to be on good terms with this country. Speaking of sovereign rulers to her Majesty, he made use of an expression which was very remarkable as coming from him; being to the effect that in modern times all princes should strive to make themselves worthy of their position, so as to reconcile people to the fact of their being princes. This

does not seem much in accordance with the ideas or practices of the Czar Nicholas; but his discernment may have taught him what his position, his passions, or his habits, did not allow him to carry out.

The Russian Emperor and the King of Saxony attended Ascot Races on the 4th of June, and witnessed a review in Windsor Park on the 5th. Every evening, a great dinner was served in the Waterloo Room at Windsor Castle.



THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS.

Visits were likewise paid to the seat of the Duke of Devonshire, at Chiswick, and to the Opera; and the Emperor seems to have been really much pleased by his reception. There can be no doubt that he had a political object in coming to England. Turkey was engaging much of his attention, as it had done in earlier years, and he was deeply desirous of carrying out the traditional policy of Russia, as it had been formulated from the days of Peter the Great. He saw that Turkey was in an impoverished and weakened state, partly in consequence of his own acts, and those of his predecessors; and he thought the time had come when some approach should be made towards an understanding with England as to what should be done with the Sultan's inheritance when he could no longer hold it for himself. With this view, he talked a good deal with

Prince Albert, Sir Robert Peel, and Lord Aberdeen. His desire to propitiate the good opinion of the English Government and people was most evident; but the events of later years showed but too plainly with what objects he pursued these conciliatory efforts. The cordial relations which had long existed between England and France were viewed by Nicholas with great distrust and jealousy; for he feared—what, in fact, afterwards occurred—that the two Powers might combine to restrain his ambition in the East. He wished to break up the good feeling between England and France, but met with no encouragement in this respect from Sir Robert Peel. He said that he did not covet an inch of Turkish soil for himself, but that he would not allow anybody else to have one. This, of course, was spoken with reference to France, who had undoubtedly, a few years before, shown a disposition to establish herself in Syria and Egypt. Sir Robert Peel replied by answering that no Government should be created in Egypt too powerful to close the passage across that country to the commerce or the mails of England.

The conversation with the English Premier and Minister for Foreign Affairs took the ultimate form of a Memorandum drawn up by Count Nesselrode by order of the Emperor after his return to St. Petersburg. Being transmitted to England, this document was deposited in the secret archives of the Foreign Office, but made public some ten years later, at the period of the Crimean War. "Russia and England," said the Memorandum, "are mutually penetrated with the conviction that it is for their common interest that the Ottoman Porte should maintain itself in the state of independence and of territorial possession which at present constitutes that Empire, as that political combination is the one which is most compatible with the general interest of the maintenance of peace. Being agreed on this principle, Russia and England have an equal interest in uniting their efforts in order to keep up the Ottoman Empire, and to avert all the dangers which can place in jeopardy its safety." The Memorandum then went on to observe that the Porte had a constant tendency to extricate itself from engagements imposed upon it by treaties concluded with other Powers; that it hoped to do so with impunity, because it reckoned upon the mutual jealousy of the Cabinets; that, when coming into collision with any one of the Powers on this account, it relied on the others to espouse its quarrel; that it was essential not to confirm the Porte in this delusion; and that every time it failed in its obligations towards one of the Great Powers, it was the interest of all the rest to bring their influence to bear upon the offender. "The object for which Russia and England will have to come to an understanding," the Memorandum went on to say, "may be expressed in the following manner:—(1) To seek to maintain the existence of the Ottoman Empire in its present state, so long as that political combination shall be possible. (2) If we foresee that it must crumble to pieces, to enter into previous concert as to everything relating to the establishment of a new order of things, intended to replace that which now exists, and, in conjunction with each other, to see that

the change which may have occurred in the internal situation of that Empire shall not injuriously affect either the security of their own States, and the rights which the treaties assure to them respectively, or the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe." The Emperor declared that Russia and Austria were agreed as to this policy, and that, if England, as the principal maritime Power, would act in concert with them, France would in all probability be obliged to follow the same course, and thus the peace of Europe would be maintained. The fixed intention of Russia, to take the earliest opportunity of making a combined attack upon Turkey, is glaringly apparent throughout this document; and it is little to the credit of Sir Robert Peel and Lord Aberdeen that they should have given any sanction whatever to such a project. The Memorandum of 1844 enabled the Russian Emperor, in 1854, to allege a common understanding with England, in defence of his designs against Turkey. The Earl of Aberdeen was probably the moving spirit in the matter, so far as Great Britain was concerned; and it is one of many proofs that that Minister had far too kindly a regard for the interests of the Northern Power.

Nicholas quitted London on the 9th of June, after producing a very good impression on the ladies and gentlemen of the Court by his magnificent presents of jewels to the former, and, as regarded the latter, by the gift of a very valuable cup, to be annually run for at Ascot, which he had visited twice during his brief stay. Whether he produced an equally good impression on the mass of the English people, is a very doubtful matter. It was said at the time that he was hissed on one occasion, when driving out with the Queen; and it is probable that such was the fact. He was disliked as a despot; his conduct towards Poland was viewed with detestation; and that he had designs on India, was suspected and believed by many. But his reception at the English Court was sufficiently warm to create a feeling of irritation on the part of the French, who inferred—not altogether without reason—that some secret arrangement had been made to the prejudice of their interests. It was feared for a time that this sentiment would have the effect of setting aside a visit to England which had been contemplated by Louis Philippe since the visit of the Queen and Prince Albert to that monarch in the previous year. Alluding to the fear that this compliment might not be paid, in consequence of what had happened with the Emperor, her Majesty, in writing to King Leopold, says:—"I hope that you will persuade the King (Louis Philippe) to come all the same in September. Our motives and politics are, *not* to be exclusive, but to be on good terms with all—and why should we not? We make no secret of it." The King of Saxony left England on the 19th of June, and the Court now returned to its usual and somewhat quiet routine.

Parliament had been opened by the Queen in person on the 1st of February, and all had gone on fairly well for some months. The financial policy of Sir Robert Peel had led to admirable results, and at the close of the year ending the 5th of April, 1844, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a surplus of

£4,165,000, which, after deducting what was required to pay off the deficiency of the previous year, left a balance of £1,400,000. It might have been supposed that all political parties would have been equally pleased with so fortunate a condition; but many amongst the supporters of Sir Robert Peel himself were dissatisfied with what had been done, because it was effected in despite of their own Protectionist views. On the 14th of June, accordingly, they voted in force against the resolutions proposed by the Government upon the Sugar Duties. An amendment to those resolutions was brought forward, and, on a division,



CATHEDRAL OF ST. ISAAC, ST. PETERSBURG.

Ministers found themselves in a minority of twenty in a House of 462. The Premier and his principal colleagues were disposed to resign at once; but at a large meeting of Conservatives, held on the 17th of June, so much confidence in the Government was expressed, that Peel hesitated in his intention, and, on the evening of the same day, a vote in Committee reversed the decision of the 14th. The Prime Minister had clearly intimated that, unless such a reversal was obtained, he should resign office; and the threat had doubtless operated on many who delighted to embarrass the Ministry, but did not wish to see it upset.

Another disagreeable circumstance occurred at the same time. On the 14th of June, Mr. Thomas Duncombe presented to the House of Commons a petition from the Italian revolutionist, Signor Mazzini, and three others, complaining

that during the past month a number of their letters, passing through the General Post Office—letters, they averred, written for no political purpose, and containing no treasonable or libellous matter—had been regularly detained and opened. The circumstance led to great excitement at the time, and many not belonging to the extreme order of politicians condemned the Home Secretary, Sir James Graham, for the course he had adopted. Mr. Carlyle wrote to the



JOSEPH MAZZINI.

Times, setting forth that he had known Signor Mazzini for several years, and that he considered him "a man of genius and virtue, a man of sterling veracity, humanity, and nobleness of mind;" moreover, that opening a man's letters was nearly akin to picking his pockets, and even to still viler forms of scoundrelism. The writer, however, admitted that letters might be opened if a Gunpowder Plot were imminent, or some national wreck were not far off; but he would on no account sanction the practice until those conditions had been fulfilled. Now, the plain truth of the matter appears to have been this—that Signor Mazzini had taken advantage of his place of refuge in England to conspire with divers Republicans in Italy for the destruction of Austrian

and Papal despotism in that peninsula. The intentions of these persons may have been admirable, and certainly the annihilation of the tyrannies against which they conspired was highly desirable, in the interests both of Italy and the whole world. But it is not proper for any Government to allow foreigners living under its protection to conspire against other States with which the protecting country is at peace. Sir James Graham had reason to believe that Mazzini was occupied in doing this very thing, and he showed conclusively that the Secretary of State had been invested by Parliament with the power, in certain cases, of issuing warrants, by virtue of which letters might be opened. Some former Home Secretaries declared that they had used this power, and the case began to assume another aspect. A Secret Committee of the two Houses, however, was appointed to inquire into the law and practice of opening private letters at the Post Office. The Report of this Committee showed that the annual average of warrants, at no time very high, had in recent years decreased rather than augmented, and that Sir James Graham had been particularly conscientious in the exercise of his right; and the outcry soon died away.

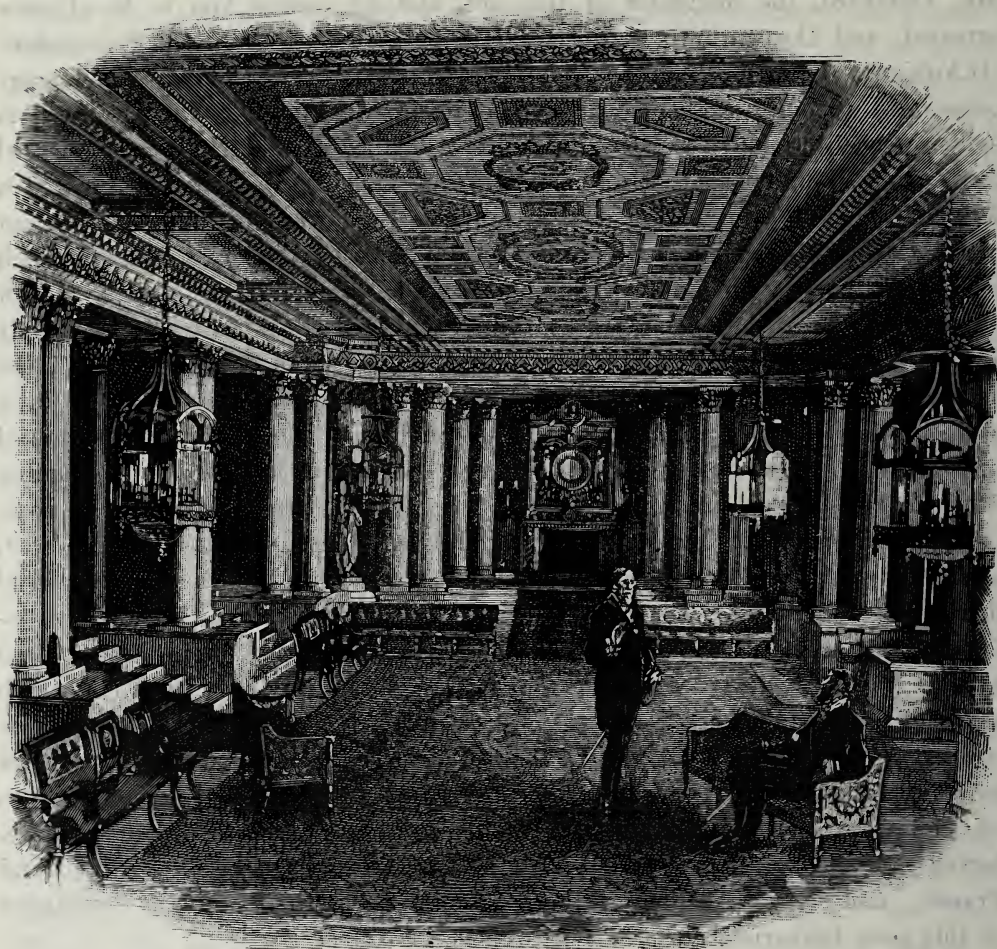
Difficulties with France occurred during the year 1844, which were doubtless aggravated by the irritable state of French opinion consequent on the apprehension that England was intriguing with Russia against the interests of France in the East. The island of Otaheite, or Tahiti, situated in the South Pacific Ocean, had for the last two years been a subject of contention between France and England. The territory was visited by Commodore Byron in 1765, and two years later by Captain Wallis, who called it George III. Island. It was explored by Captain Cook in 1768 and two subsequent years. In 1799 the district of Matavai was ceded to some English missionaries; so that, as far as European Powers were concerned, the island seems to have belonged more to England than to any other country. But, on the 9th of September, 1842, Queen Pomare was compelled to put herself under the protection of France. She soon afterwards retracted her enforced consent, and Tahiti, together with the neighbouring islands, was then seized by Admiral Dupetit Thouars in the name of the French King. The natives of Tahiti, as of the Society Islands generally, had shown considerable readiness to adopt the ways of civilisation, and the Protestant missionaries sent out by England had effected a considerable improvement in their habits. After a time, certain Roman Catholic missionaries made their appearance in the island, and endeavoured to interfere with that part of the population which had already been converted by the Protestants. Quarrels very naturally ensued, and France interposed on behalf of her fellow-believers. Such was the origin of the disagreements between France and England with respect to Tahiti. Public feeling in both countries was greatly inflamed; but the French Government, in deference to English remonstrances, represented that they would be satisfied with simply exercising a Protectorate over the island. The opposition in the French Chambers characterised this concession as an

act of gratuitous humiliation for their country, and it was feared that war would ensue.

This was rendered all the more probable in the early part of 1844, when, on the 2nd of March, a French sentinel was disarmed by the natives. The French Commandant chose to consider the English missionary and Consul, Mr. Pritchard, the instigator of this act, and he caused him to be at once arrested, and thrown into prison. "His property," wrote the Commandant (D'Aubigny), in an excited proclamation, "shall be answerable for all damage occasioned to our establishments by the insurgents; and if French blood is spilt, every drop shall recoil on his head." Pritchard was afterwards released from prison, but expelled the island, and, on arriving in England, created a ferment of public indignation on the subject of his wrongs. The Government of Sir Robert Peel demanded satisfaction of France for the gross outrage which had been committed on a British subject; and both the King and M. Guizot were willing that this should be done. But it is no easy matter to be simply just on such an occasion. Every Government must take some account of the sentiment existing amongst its population, and France just then was in a state of fiery wrath against England. Nevertheless, the matter was arranged after an interval of some months. On the last day of the session (September 5th) Sir Robert Peel announced that the French Ministry had agreed to compensate Pritchard for his sufferings and losses. Queen Pomare was allowed, as a matter of form, to enjoy the Royal dignity; but the French were the actual masters of the island. The termination of the affair was not altogether satisfactory, for Queen Pomare had long been our faithful ally, and, when coerced by the French, had written a touching letter to the English Queen, in which she said, "Do not cast me away, my friend. I run to you for refuge, to be covered under your great shadow; the same that afforded relief to my fathers by your fathers, who are now dead, and whose kingdoms have descended to us, the weaker vessels." To have taken up the cause of Queen Pomare, however, would in all probability have led to hostilities between England and France; and Queen Victoria, therefore, could do nothing for the assistance of this poor barbarian.

Before the settlement of this burning question, her Majesty had, on the 6th of August, given birth to a second son at Windsor Castle. The Royal child was afterwards christened Alfred, but is better known to the present generation as the Duke of Edinburgh. Writing to King Leopold shortly after her confinement, the Queen said:—"The only thing, almost, to mar our happiness is the heavy and threatening cloud which hangs over our relations with France, and which, I assure you, distresses and alarms us sadly. The whole nation here are very angry. . . . God grant all may come right, and I am still of good cheer; but the French keep us constantly in hot water." On the 27th of August her Majesty again wrote to the Belgian sovereign:—"The impending political cloud, I hope, looks less black and lowering. But I think it very

unwise in Guizot not to have at once discovered D'Aubigny for what you yourself call an 'outrage,' instead of allowing it to drag on for four weeks, and letting our people get excited." After the matter had been settled, the Queen remarked that they must try to prevent such difficulties in the future;



THE MARBLE HALL, BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

(From a Photograph by H. N. King.)

but this, unfortunately, is impossible while nations are so apt to set up a false standard of honour in the place of justice.

One of the pacific successes of the Peel Administration was the conclusion of the Ashburton Treaty with the Government of the United States. A good deal of mutual irritation had existed for several years, owing to the absence of a distinct and undisputed boundary between Canada and the State of Maine. The matter had at one time been referred to the arbitration of the King of the Netherlands; but neither party would accept his award. Sir Robert Peel,

therefore, sent out a special negotiator in the person of Lord Ashburton, a member of the great commercial family of the Barings. The American representative was the Secretary of State, Mr. Webster—a man of the highest ability, both as an orator and a statesman; and, after much discussion, a treaty was signed at Washington on the 9th of August, 1842. The boundary thus established was said to give England a better military frontier than she had



THE QUEEN AND THE REAPERS AT BLAIR CASTLE. (See p. 171.)

possessed before, and it certainly included some heights commanding the St. Lawrence which had not been assigned to us by the King of the Netherlands. The conclusion of this treaty was announced to Parliament at the opening of the session of 1843, and Sir Robert Peel claimed credit for having brought about so favourable an adjustment. This, however, was not the view entertained by the Opposition; and Lord Palmerston, in calling the attention of the House of Commons to the treaty, on the 21st of March, 1843, described it as “the Ashburton capitulation.” Undoubtedly, the larger part of the disputed territory was handed over to the United States, and it has since been generally considered by Englishmen that Mr. Webster demanded and obtained more than his country was entitled to. Some other clauses of the treaty were excellent. Provision was made for the better suppression of the slave traffic, and it was agreed

that each country should render up to the other certain classes of criminals against whom a sufficient case should be established by due legal process. Lord Palmerston could never tolerate the Ashburton Treaty so far as the territorial rearrangement was concerned. He thought it would be productive of many evil consequences; but it was high time that a vexatious question, creating a certain amount of ill-will, should be brought to a final settlement. The Ashburton Treaty was perhaps the best that could be effected, and Englishmen have long ceased to consider its details.

CHAPTER X.

DAYS OF PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS.

Visit of the Prince of Prussia to England—Christening of Prince Alfred at Windsor Castle—Second Visit to the Highlands in the Autumn of 1844—Louis Philippe in England—His Reception at Windsor—Interchange of Courtesies between English and French Officers—Opening of the New Royal Exchange by the Queen—Letters of her Majesty and Prince Albert on the Occasion—Scientific Progress: the Electric Telegraph, Photography, Lord Rosse's Telescope, the Thames Tunnel, and Arctic Exploration—Tractarian Difficulties in the Church—Purchase of Osborne by the Queen—Visits of her Majesty and the Prince to Stowe and Strathfieldsaye—Opening of Parliament by the Queen (Feb. 4th, 1845)—Financial Statement of Sir Robert Peel—Reduction and Abolition of Duties—Acrimonious Debates on the Proposed Queen's Colleges in Ireland, and the Increase of the Maynooth Grant—Retirement of Mr. Gladstone from the Ministry—Admission of Jews to Municipal Offices—Results of Sir Robert Peel's Financial Policy—Economy in the Royal Household—Project for making Prince Albert King Consort—The Chief Command of the Army.

WHILE the Queen and Prince Albert were contemplating, in the late summer of 1844, a second tour in Scotland, they received a visit at Windsor from one who afterwards became illustrious on the stage of European history, as the German Emperor. The Prince of Prussia, brother of the reigning King, arrived at the Castle on the 31st of August, and was described by the Queen as amiable, sensible, amusing, and frank. Her Majesty thought he would make a steadier and safer King than his brother, and it cannot be doubted but that his reign was actually more successful and more distinguished. The Prince was at that time forty-seven years of age. As a youth, he had taken part in the campaigns against France in 1813, 1814, and 1815, and was then holding the post of Governor of Pomerania. He was therefore, even in 1844, a man of some experience in affairs, and he showed no little penetration in discriminating between the adaptability of the British Constitution to the needs of the British people as those needs were then, and its fitness for Continental nations, where the surroundings are wholly different. His visit to England was short, but, before he left, he attended, in the Private Chapel at Windsor Castle, on the 6th of September, the christening

of the infant Prince, to whom were given the names of Alfred Ernest Albert. The sponsors on this occasion were Prince George of Cambridge, represented by his father, the Duke of Cambridge; the Prince of Leiningen, represented by the Duke of Wellington; and H.R.H. the Duchess of Saxe Coburg and Gotha, represented by H.R.H. the Duchess of Kent. The scene in the chapel was very solemn, and the Queen records its effect on her in a few heartfelt words preserved in her Journal.

It had been the intention of her Majesty to visit Ireland in the autumn of 1844; but the excitement in that country, consequent on the Repeal agitation, the trial of O'Connell, and the subsequent release of the agitator, made it imprudent for the sovereign and her consort to trust themselves in the sister island. They accordingly fell back on another Scottish tour, the remembrance of the earlier one having induced in both a strong desire to repeat so agreeable an experience. The Royal party started on the 9th of September, and sailed from Woolwich in the yacht *Victoria and Albert*. On the 11th, they entered the Frith of Tay, and landed at Dundee. From this place they advanced in a north-westerly direction into the Highlands, where they took up their residence at Blair Castle, Blair Athole, the seat of Lord Glenlyon (afterwards the Duke of Athole), who placed his house and grounds at the disposal of her Majesty. The road thither is exceedingly picturesque, with high hills and deep woods, and part of it led through the Pass of Killiecrankie, the beauty of which drew forth warm praises from Prince Albert. All around the scenery is of the most magnificent description, and the wildness of the prospects, the purity of the air, and the softness of the sunshine, not only gave the deepest delight to the Royal visitors, but had a beneficial influence on their health. They got up early in the morning, and therefore had full enjoyment of the best part of the day. One morning, a lady, plainly dressed, issued from the gates of Blair Athole, and passed the Highland guard without being noticed. When it was discovered that this lady was the Queen, a party of Highlanders turned out as a body-guard, but were told that their services were not required. Her Majesty then passed on to the lodge, where Lord and Lady Glenlyon were dwelling for the time. She was informed that his Lordship was not yet up, and the servant was much astonished to hear who the early visitor was. On her return the Queen lost her way, and was directed by some reapers which path she should take to reach Blair Castle. In the after-part of the same day her Majesty and the Prince went on an excursion with Lord Glenlyon. Writing to the Dowager Duchess of Coburg on the 22nd of September, Prince Albert says:—"We are all well, and live a somewhat primitive, yet romantic, mountain life, that acts as a tonic to the nerves, and gladdens the heart of a lover, like myself, of field-sports and of Nature." And the Queen says in her Diary that, "independently of the beautiful scenery, there was a quiet, a retirement, a wildness, a liberty, and a solitude," about their surroundings,

which possessed an exquisite charm for both. The Royal party left Blair Castle on the 1st of October, and were again at Windsor on the 3rd.

Three days later the King of the French landed at Portsmouth. Many of the French newspapers were strongly opposed to his coming, on account of the Tahiti affair, in which it was considered by extreme politicians that France had been injured and outwitted by England. But Louis Philippe and M. Guizot determined that the visit should take place, as the most likely way of restoring the good relations of the two countries. At Portsmouth, the King was received by the naval authorities of the place, and, before landing, the Mayor and Corporation presented him with an address, in answer to which he said:—"I have not forgotten the many kindnesses I have received from your countrymen during my residence among you many years since. At that period, I was frequently pained at the existence of differences and feuds between our countries. I assure you, gentlemen, I shall endeavour at all times to prevent a repetition of those feelings and that conduct, believing, as I do most sincerely, that the happiness and prosperity of a nation depend quite as much on the peace of those nations by which it is surrounded as on quiet within its own dominions." The Duke of Wellington went with Prince Albert to receive the King on his arrival, and accompanied him to Windsor Castle. Louis Philippe was much moved at his reception by the Queen, and his hand shook somewhat as he alighted from his carriage. He was the first French sovereign who had ever come on a visit to the monarch of Great Britain; so that the occasion was a very memorable one. It must in fairness be acknowledged that the King of the Barricades, as he used to be called, entertained a friendly feeling towards England, where he had spent some of his early days of exile, so that he was sincerely desirous of preserving peace between the two dominions. He delighted to visit all his old haunts in the neighbourhood of Twickenham and Clarendon. His conversation was very sprightly, and he recalled the old revolutionary days when, being compelled to seek refuge in the Grisons, under the name of Chabot, he acted as teacher in a school, where he received twenty pence a day, and had to brush his own shoes.

Wherever he went, the reception of the French King was much more hearty than that of the Emperor of Russia a few months before, and he was enchanted with all he saw and heard. On the 9th of October he was invested by her Majesty with the Order of the Garter, and on the 12th received the Corporation of the City of London, who journeyed down to Windsor to pay their respects. The King left England on the 13th. His original intention was to return, as he had come, by way of Portsmouth; but, on his arrival at that harbour on the 12th, accompanied by the Queen and Prince Albert, the weather proved too rough for so long a passage, and Louis Philippe therefore travelled up to London, and on the following day crossed from Dover to Calais. The French Admiral and his officers, who were to have conveyed the King back to Tréport, were much vexed at being disappointed of that honour; and, as



RECEPTION OF LOUIS PHILIPPE AT WINDSOR CASTLE. (See p. 172.)

some kind of compensation, the Queen and Prince Albert breakfasted next morning on board the frigate which had brought Louis Philippe over. Her Majesty excited the highest enthusiasm of the French officers by proposing and drinking the King's health. There had in fact been much interchange of courtesies between the French visitors and the English officers stationed at Portsmouth; but it may be questioned whether these mutual compliments did not sometimes a little transgress the limits of sincerity. The Earl of Malmesbury is probably not far wrong when he records in his *Memoirs*:—"The officers of the French fleet have met with a most enthusiastic reception at Portsmouth. The English officers gave them a ball and a dinner; healths were drunk, and speeches made, and an immense quantity of humbug exchanged; but the French like that, so I hope it will put them in good humour." The worst of these receptions is, that, although they may be sincere up to a certain point, they have a tendency to run into extravagance, and may thus provoke a reaction at some future date.

Before the end of the same month the Queen was engaged in a domestic ceremony of great interest to the citizens of London, and to many others far beyond the limits of the capital. The old Royal Exchange, the successor to Sir Thomas Gresham's original building, destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666, was consumed in a conflagration which broke out on the 10th of January, 1838. The new building—that which now stands—was erected from the designs of Mr. William Tite, and opened by her Majesty in person on the 28th of October, 1844. The procession left Buckingham Palace at eleven o'clock A.M., and passed through streets gaily decorated for the occasion. Her Majesty's carriage was drawn by eight cream-coloured horses, and the chief occupant wore a tiara of diamonds and a white ermine mantle. On alighting at the Exchange, the Queen and Prince Albert, preceded by the Lord Mayor with his Sword of State, went over the building, and finally entered the Reading Room. Here, seated on a throne, her Majesty received the address which had been prepared by the City authorities, and which was read by the Recorder. Allusion was made in it to the fact that the first building had been opened by Queen Elizabeth, and a hope was expressed that the new edifice would endure for ages, a memorial and monument of the commercial grandeur, the prosperity, and the peaceful triumphs of Victoria's reign.

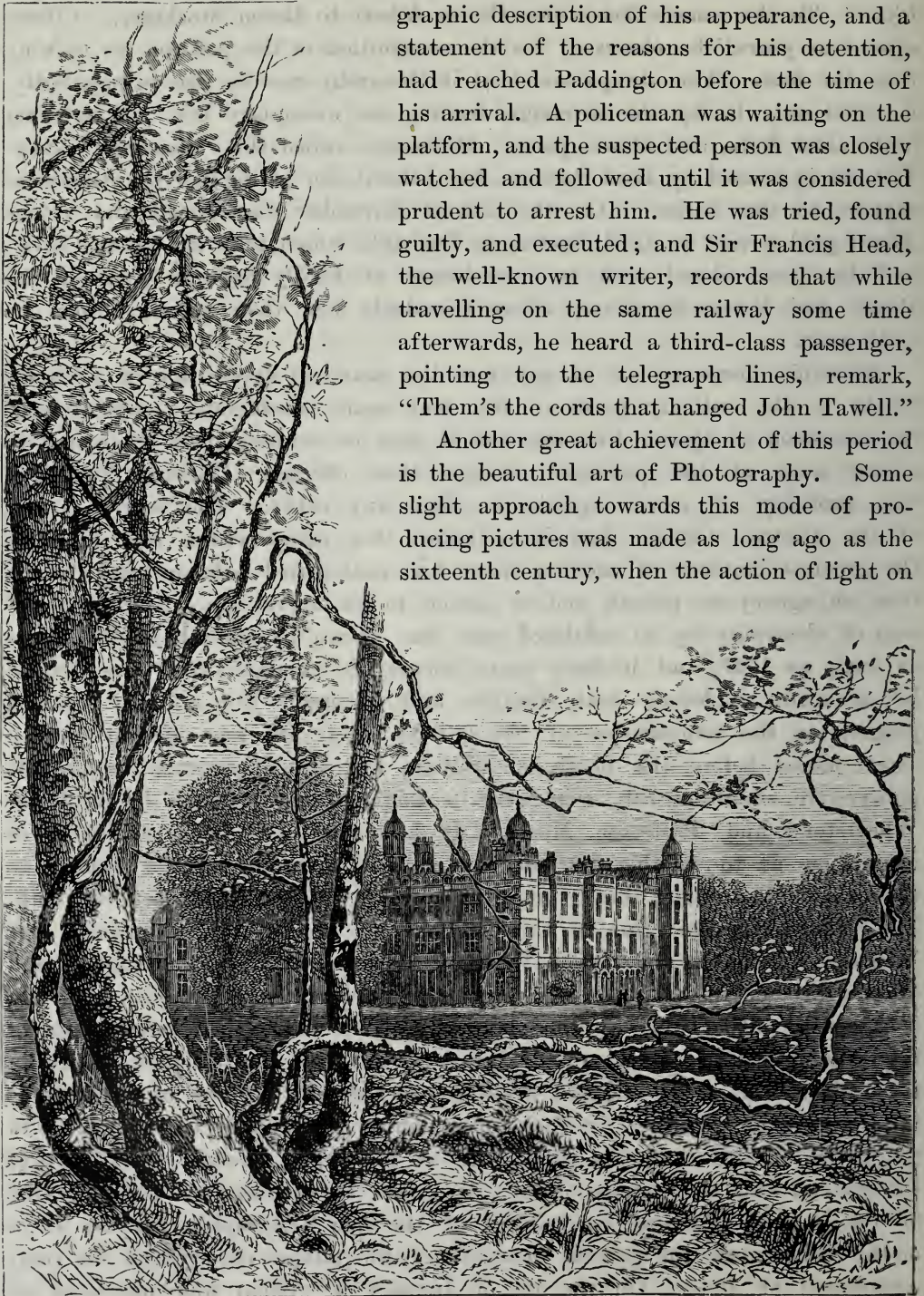
After reading her reply, the Queen intimated to the Lord Mayor (Alderman Magnay) her intention to confer on him the dignity of a baronet. A sumptuous luncheon was afterwards served in the Underwriters' Room, and the proceedings of the day closed by the Queen announcing, after silence had been enjoined by the heralds, that it was her will and pleasure that the building should be thenceforth called "The Royal Exchange." Her Majesty was greatly pleased by her reception, and wrote next day to King Leopold:—"Nothing ever went off better, and the procession there, as well as the proceedings at the Royal Exchange, were splendid and royal in the extreme.

it was a fine and gratifying sight to see the myriads of people assembled, more than at the Coronation even, and all in such good humour, and so loyal." To the same effect wrote Prince Albert to Baron Stockmar. "Here, after four years," he observed, "is the recognition of the position we took up from the first. You always said that if Monarchy was to rise in popularity, it could only be by the sovereign leading an exemplary life, and keeping quite aloof from, and above, party. Melbourne called this 'nonsense.' Now, Victoria is praised by Lord Spencer, the Liberal, for giving her Constitutional support to the Tories." On the 12th of November the Queen and Prince Albert paid a visit to Lord Exeter, at Burleigh, which they left on the 15th; and the year closed with an interchange of kindly feelings between the Prince and Baron Stockmar, whose friendship was then entering upon its sixth year.

Scientific discovery, or at any rate the practical application of scientific truths to the ordinary needs of life, had made considerable progress since the accession of Queen Victoria, and it may be convenient at this stage to review some of the principal changes thus effected. Electric Telegraph was probably of more importance than any other. The active powers of the electric "fluid" had been known for many years, and some of the greatest inquirers of modern times had anticipated extraordinary results from an agency so potent, and so various in its operations. The transmission of electricity by an insulated wire was shown by several experimenters as early as 1747, and in later years telegraphic arrangements were devised by scientific explorers, both English and foreign. But no very decided progress in the transmission of thought by electricity was effected until a short period before the death of William IV., when somewhat analogous plans were simultaneously conceived in England and America by Professor Wheatstone and Professor Morse. It has sometimes been a matter of contention as to whether the honour of this discovery should belong to the one or the other; but it may in truth be fairly divided between both. The first telegraphic line in England was set up by Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Cooke, on the Great Western Railway, between Paddington and West Drayton, in 1838-9. The first telegraphic line in America was not constructed until 1844. From those respective dates, the new means of intercommunication spread rapidly on both sides of the Atlantic, until, in these days, the whole civilised world is covered with a mesh of telegraphic lines, almost as wonderful in their operation as the web of nerves which, in the living animal, carry the conceptions of the brain through every part of the system, and the impression of the senses to the seat of reason. One of the earliest practical applications of the new telegraphic system, in a matter concerning the general interests of the public, occurred at the commencement of 1845. On the 1st of January a woman was murdered at Salt Hill, near Slough, and a certain Quaker with whom she had been

intimate was suspected of the crime. The man made his way to Slough, and proceeded by train to London; but a telegraphic description of his appearance, and a statement of the reasons for his detention, had reached Paddington before the time of his arrival. A policeman was waiting on the platform, and the suspected person was closely watched and followed until it was considered prudent to arrest him. He was tried, found guilty, and executed; and Sir Francis Head, the well-known writer, records that while travelling on the same railway some time afterwards, he heard a third-class passenger, pointing to the telegraph lines, remark, "Them's the cords that hanged John Tawell."

Another great achievement of this period is the beautiful art of Photography. Some slight approach towards this mode of producing pictures was made as long ago as the sixteenth century, when the action of light on



BURLEIGH HOUSE, STAMFORD.

chloride of silver was discovered. Further results were obtained during the eighteenth century, particularly by Thomas Wedgwood (son of the celebrated potter) and Sir Humphry Davy. Wedgwood was the author of a paper, published in 1802 in the *Journal of the Royal Institution*, which he entitled "An Account of a Method of Copying Paintings upon Glass, and of making Profiles by the Agency of Light upon Nitrate of Silver." The art, however, made no great progress until it was taken up in France by M. Daguerre, who worked in concert with M. Joseph Nicéphore Niepce. The latter died in 1833, after several years' association with M. Daguerre; but it was not until January, 1839, that the production of photographic plates was publicly announced by his partner. In the same year, Mr. Henry Fox Talbot published his mode of multiplying photographic impressions by producing in the first instance a negative photograph, from which any number of positive copies could be obtained. The earliest photographs were called Daguerreotypes and Talbotypes, after the French and English inventors; but in a few years both appellations were superseded by the Greek word *photography*—literally, a "light-writing," though a "light-picture" would be the more proper description. The uses of photography have been manifold, and the satisfaction they have given in preserving the very reflex of the faces of our dead relations and cherished friends is doubtless the greatest triumph of all. Within a few months of his death, Prince Albert was deeply moved on receiving from his daughter, the Crown Princess of Prussia, a daguerreotype of his father. "How precious," he writes to her on the 3rd of September, 1861, "is the daguerreotype! After seventeen years which have glided by since my dear father was taken away, all at once his shade has come before me—for such, in fact, it is."*

To the early part of Queen Victoria's reign must be referred some of the most practical applications of the gigantic telescope erected by the Earl of Rosse at Parsonstown, in Ireland. This wonderful instrument (which, however, has been much surpassed by later telescopes) was in active operation from 1828 to 1845. Its power was such as to exhibit the very rocks on this side of the moon, and our knowledge of that satellite—a barren, mournful sphere of extinguished vitality—was greatly increased by the scientific labours of Lord Rosse and his coadjutors. Returning to mundane matters, we must refer to the opening of the Thames Tunnel, which took place on the 25th of March, 1843. The shaft had been commenced, and the first brick laid, as far back as the 2nd of March, 1825; but the work was twice delayed by the irruption of water. This subway between Wapping and Rotherhithe was undoubtedly a splendid triumph of modern engineering, and reflected the highest credit on Mr. I. K. Brunel, who proposed and carried out the design. But the tunnel was not long popular, and, after the dissolution of the Company in 1866, the work was transferred to the East London Railway, by which it has since been

* Sir Theodore Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort*, Vol. I.

used. The Queen and Prince Albert were much interested in the tunnel, and, in July, 1843, honoured it with a visit of inspection.

Arctic discovery made some important strides about this date. Sir John Franklin, accompanied by Captains Crozier and Fitzjames, sailed in the *Erebus* and *Terror* on his third Arctic Expedition, May 24th, 1845. From subsequent investigations, it appears that he discovered the North-west passage, having sailed down Peel and Victoria Straits (now called Franklin's Straits) a few months after his arrival in those inhospitable regions. The Expedition, however, was fatal to the brave explorers. All England waited with anxiety for tidings of these adventurous men; but, after a few despatches, an appalling silence and mystery descended on the enterprise. Months passed away, and nothing more was heard of the *Erebus* and *Terror*. It was as if ships and men had been snatched away from the world; and the public could comfort itself only with vague hopes that, after all, the vessels and their crew would reappear at some unexpected corner of the earth. When the suspense became no longer bearable, expeditions were sent out in search of the missing voyagers, and coals, provisions, clothing, and other necessities, were deposited at various points by the English and American Governments, by Lady Franklin, and by several private individuals. Some years later, wild rumours started up that Sir John Franklin and the gaunt remnant of his crew had been seen at this place and at that; but these accounts always proved incorrect. It is unnecessary to recount the numerous expeditions sent out by Lady Franklin, and by the Governments of Great Britain and the United States. Suffice it to say that, on the 6th of May, 1859, Lieutenant Hobson found at Point Victory, near Cape Victoria, a cairn and a tin case, the latter containing a paper, signed on the 25th of April, 1848, by Captain Fitzjames, which certified that the ships *Erebus* and *Terror* were beset with ice on the 12th of September, 1846; that Sir John Franklin died on the 11th of the following June; and that the ships were deserted on the 22nd of April, 1848. Some skeletons and other relics were afterwards discovered; but the precise nature of the sufferings endured by these heroic men is swallowed up for ever in the icy silence of the Polar Seas.

The rapid development of Tractarianism in the Church of England drew forth from the Archbishop of Canterbury a letter to the clergy of the Established Church, dated January 11th, 1845. His Grace forbore from giving any authoritative opinion on the practices recently introduced, but recommended moderation, forbearance, and mutual concession. Where the Tractarian innovations had been submitted to quietly, he thought they should be continued; but where they had been violently opposed, he advised the clergyman not to insist on their observance. Uniformity in the mode of conducting public worship he regarded as extremely desirable; but, as the Rubric was not very consistent with itself, he admitted that its authors might possibly have contemplated the existence of some diversity, when sanctioned by convenience. Nothing could be more amiable than the feeling which prompted this address; but it

was clearly unfitted to appease the feelings of either the Tractarians or the Anti-Tractarians. Both sides were committed to the most extreme views, which they advocated with mutual bitterness. Eight days after the publication of the Archbishop's circular, there was a disturbance in St. Sidwell's Church, Exeter, arising out of the Puseyite practices of the Rev. Francis Courtenay. The matter was referred to the Bishop of Exeter by the Mayor, and the former wrote to Mr. Courtenay, recommending him to give way at the request of the civil authorities, and not to persist in wearing the surplice in the pulpit, unless his conscience should require him to do so. At the present day it seems a ridiculous wrangling over trifles to dispute whether a clergyman shall wear a surplice or a gown; but it should be recollected that these trifles were commonly held to be the outward manifestations of a fixed determination on the part of all Puseyite clergymen to assimilate the Church of England to the Church of Rome. If the opposition to the surplice was trivial, so also was the determination to wear it: if the wearing of the surplice involved a serious principle on the one side, the resistance involved an equally serious principle on the other. Yet the Archbishop of Canterbury thought that a few kindly words would compose these heart-burnings, which had already destroyed the peace of the Church, and now threatened its very existence.

From all such vexed questions, and from the inevitable contentions of party, it was an unspeakable comfort to the Queen and Prince Albert to be able to retire for a brief season to some quiet country spot, where they could live in repose and privacy. This immunity from public cares gave their special charm to the Scottish tours. But the Highlands are remote from London, and it was very desirable that some place should be found, sufficiently removed for a leisurely seclusion, and sufficiently near the metropolis for a quick and easy return. When her Majesty and the Prince accompanied the King of the French to Portsmouth at the conclusion of his visit in the autumn of 1844, they saw a charming estate in the Isle of Wight, which has since become famous as the marine residence of Osborne. It was Sir Robert Peel who drew their attention to this beautiful retreat, and in the early part of 1845 it was purchased by her Majesty. "It sounds so pleasant," wrote the Queen to King Leopold, "to have a place of one's own, quiet and retired, and free from all Woods and Forests, and other charming departments, which really are the plague of one's life." The estate was afterwards enlarged by further purchases, and the mansion then existing was almost immediately pulled down, that a larger and more dignified edifice might occupy its site. The new structure was planned by Prince Albert, and the building operations were conducted by the late Mr. Thomas Cubitt. The grounds also were laid out by the Prince, and the ornamental plantations, which owed their existence to him, are still amongst the greatest beauties of the Royal domain. Here likewise, as at Windsor, his Royal Highness had a farm for scientific agriculture, which he managed so admirably that in a little while he made it pay.

Before the opening of Parliament the Queen and Prince Albert paid two visits which were productive of general satisfaction. The first, which took place about the middle of January, was to the seat of the Duke of Buckingham at Stowe, where the Royal couple were received in a style of unusual magnificence. The other visit was to the Duke of Wellington at Strathfieldsaye, where the Royal party arrived on the 20th of January. "The Duke," writes Mr. Anson, "takes the Queen in to dinner, and sits by her Majesty, and after dinner gets up and says, 'With your Majesty's permission, I give the health of her Majesty,' and then the same for the Prince. They then adjourn to



OSBORNE, ISLE OF WIGHT.

the library, and the Duke sits on the sofa by the Queen for the rest of the evening until eleven o'clock, the Prince and the gentlemen being scattered about in the library, or the billiard-room which opens into it. In a large conservatory beyond, the band of the Duke's Grenadier regiment plays through the evening." The Queen and Prince Albert returned on the 23rd of January to Windsor Castle, and the brief amusements of the early year speedily gave place to those important duties which are necessarily associated with the government of a great Empire.

Parliament was opened by the Queen in person on the 4th of February. The Royal Speech referred with satisfaction to the decline of political agitation in Ireland. It was mentioned that, as a natural result of this change, private capital had been more freely applied than previously to useful public



THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON AT WINDSOR CASTLE.

enterprises, undertaken through the friendly co-operation of individuals interested in the welfare of that country. Sir Robert Peel made his annual financial statement on the 14th of the same month. The Bank Charter Act of 1844, for separating the issue from the banking department of the great establishment in Threadneedle Street, limiting the issue of notes, and requiring the whole of the further circulation to be on a basis of bullion, had already placed the monetary affairs of the country on a better footing. As regarded the Budget, the Premier calculated the revenue for the ensuing year at £53,100,000, and the expenditure at £49,000,000. Notwithstanding this surplus of more than £4,000,000, Sir Robert Peel considered it advisable to continue the Income Tax for a further period of three years, as he found it necessary to increase the expenditure on account of the public service, and desired to apply his surplus to the reduction of the sugar duty, together with the abolition of the duties on glass, cotton, and wool, and on the importation of Baltic staves. It was also proposed to abolish the duty on all those articles which yielded merely nominal amounts—a step which, it was calculated, would sweep away four hundred and thirty articles from the tariff. These proposals met with no great opposition, and were rapidly carried through Parliament by large majorities.

In another portion of his policy Peel encountered much more trouble. Measures were proposed for the establishment of Queen's Colleges at Belfast, Cork, and Galway, which should be open to all, without religious distinction, and for increasing the annual grant to the College of Maynooth from £9,000 to £30,000. Both measures, though ultimately successful, were calculated to exasperate some of the deepest feelings of that time; and Peel found considerable difficulty in carrying out his designs. The proposed Colleges for Belfast, Cork, and Galway, were described as the "Godless Colleges," and the expression was the common taunt levelled at all who thought such institutions likely to effect good in the mitigation of religious animosities. The opposition to the increased Maynooth grant had much more of reason on its side. The College at Maynooth had been founded by Parliament in 1795 for the education of students designed for the Roman Catholic priesthood in Ireland. An Act for its government was passed in 1800; but its existence as a State-supported institution was always repugnant to the Protestant feeling of England. When, therefore, it was proposed to add £21,000 to the yearly grant, it was not unnaturally considered by large numbers of Englishmen that the time had come for making a decided protest. No doubt a vast amount of the narrowest and fiercest bigotry was mixed up with this opposition; yet, after sweeping aside all this froth and venom, the naked fact remains that Protestants were expected to pay an annual sum towards the education of Roman Catholic priests, who were not likely to show any affection either for Protestantism or for England. The whole principle of religious endowments is open to the gravest question, and, had

the opponents of the Maynooth grant taken their stand on *that* ground, they would have advanced their cause with all reasonable men, though probably their numerical following would have been less. But the enlistment of bigotry on the side of the objectors was not unnatural from their own point of view, though it drew down on them some scathing criticisms. Mr. Macaulay, soon afterwards known as the most brilliant historian of modern times, spoke of "the bray of Exeter Hall," and lost his re-election for Edinburgh, two years later, in consequence of that sarcasm. After all the clamour of adverse opinions, Peel carried the increased grant; but for many years after, the late Mr. Spooner made an annual motion against the Maynooth College, and delivered himself of a rambling speech, to which few listened. Most persons found the subject a nuisance; and when the Irish Church was disestablished and disendowed in 1869, it was agreed that the annual Parliamentary grant to Maynooth should cease at the commencement of 1871, though compensation was made, as a matter of obvious fairness.

The augmentation of the Maynooth grant led to the resignation of Mr. Gladstone, who occupied the position of President of the Board of Trade in the Government of Sir Robert Peel. He was not at all opposed to the measure, which, in fact, he supported as a private member; but he considered that his book entitled "The State in its Relations with the Church," first published in 1838, contained some passages which precluded him from taking part as a Minister in the proposed measure. In addressing the House on the 4th of February he observed:—"I have a strong conviction, speaking under ordinary circumstances and as a general rule, that those who have borne the most solemn testimony to a particular view of a great and constitutional question ought not to be parties responsible for proposals which involve a material departure from it."

Religious questions were at that time prominently before the public, and Sir Robert Peel showed an anxiety to remove those restrictions which had formerly been considered necessary to the safety of the State and Church. During the session of 1845, a Bill was introduced by the Government for removing the test by which Jews were excluded from certain municipal offices. The existing state of the law was ridiculously inconsistent; for, while a Jew might be the High Sheriff of a county, or Sheriff of London, he was not allowed to be a Mayor, an Alderman, or a member of the Common Council. Before occupying any of these offices, he had to swear "on the true faith of a Christian," which of course no Jew would do. A measure to remove the anomaly was introduced into the Upper House by Lord Lyndhurst, the Lord Chancellor, and, strange to say, it passed through that Assembly, which had previously resisted all attempts in the same direction. The Bill underwent no danger in the House of Commons, for the Lower Chamber had in previous sessions endeavoured to effect the same reform.

Prince Albert was extremely gratified by Sir Robert Peel's Budget for 1845,

which not only, as we have seen, reduced or obliterated a vast number of vexatious duties, but at the same time placed the finances of the country on so excellent a footing as to enable the Minister to ask for the Navy and Ordnance Estimates an increase of a million and a half so as to augment the power of Great Britain at sea. For the security of our ports, seven sail of the line were always to be available in the Channel, and three on foreign stations; and the Prince saw in these arrangements a renewed guarantee for the peace of Europe. He was also much pleased by an allusion, in the financial statement of the Prime

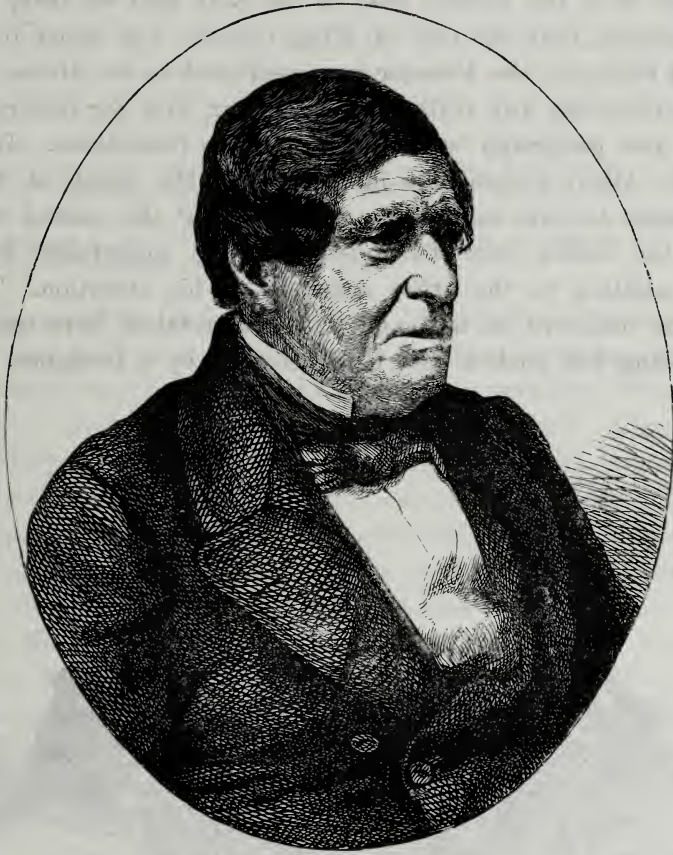


MAYNOOTH COLLEGE.

Minister, to the fact that the recent visits of Imperial and Royal personages had involved no additional expense to the country. The reforms in the administration of the Royal Household, due to the initiative of Prince Albert, had effected so great a saving that the Civil List was found quite adequate to the extra demands upon it. "Those visits," said Sir Robert Peel, "of necessity created a considerable increase of expenditure; but, through that wise system of economy which is the only source of true magnificence, her Majesty was enabled to meet every charge, and to give a reception to the sovereigns which struck every one by its magnificence, without adding one tittle to the burdens of the country. I am not required on the part of her Majesty to press for the extra expenditure of one single shilling on account of these unforeseen causes of increased

expenditure. I think that to state this is only due to the personal credit of her Majesty, who insists upon it that there shall be every magnificence required by her station, but without incurring a single debt."

These gratifying statements were transmitted by Prince Albert to Baron Stockmar, who, it will be recollected, was largely concerned in those reforms in the Household which had been productive of such admirable results. In his reply, written on the 28th of February, the Baron alludes to a speech having



LORD LYNDHURST.

reference to his Royal Highness, and asks, "What can it be which has led to the reopening of that report?" The report in question was a rumour to the effect that the title of King Consort was about to be conferred upon the Prince, by the special desire of her Majesty. For this belief there was some foundation—not as respected any existing intention, but with reference to a project which was undoubtedly formed in 1841. In that year it was the earnest wish of her Majesty that the regal title should be conferred on her consort. She perceived that his somewhat anomalous position placed him at a disadvantage with other illustrious personages, and was often inconsistent with the dignity

properly belonging to the Queen's husband. Her views were therefore submitted to the judgment of Baron Stockmar, without the Prince himself knowing anything of the matter. The Baron, with that practical sense and wisdom which always distinguished him, strongly opposed the suggestion; and so did Sir Robert Peel and Lord Aberdeen, to whom, by her Majesty's wish, Stockmar had referred the question. Both those Statesmen believed that the proposed change would be attended by undesirable results, and the project was in consequence abandoned. The revival of the idea was due in no respect either to her Majesty or to the Prince; but, in the early part of 1845, the *Morning Chronicle* announced that the title of King Consort was about to be created. On the 17th of February the Premier was questioned in the House of Commons as to whether there was any truth in this rumour, and Sir Robert Peel stated in reply that the paragraph was wholly without foundation. The design of making Prince Albert Commander-in-Chief after the death of the Duke of Wellington seems to have been really discussed for the second time at this period; but the duties were too onerous to be undertaken by his Royal Highness, in addition to the other demands on his attention. The appointment was never conferred on him, and it would certainly have been an affront to English feeling had such a post been occupied by a foreigner.



FAVOURITE DOGS. (After Etchings by the Queen.)

CHAPTER XI.

ENGLAND IN 1845.

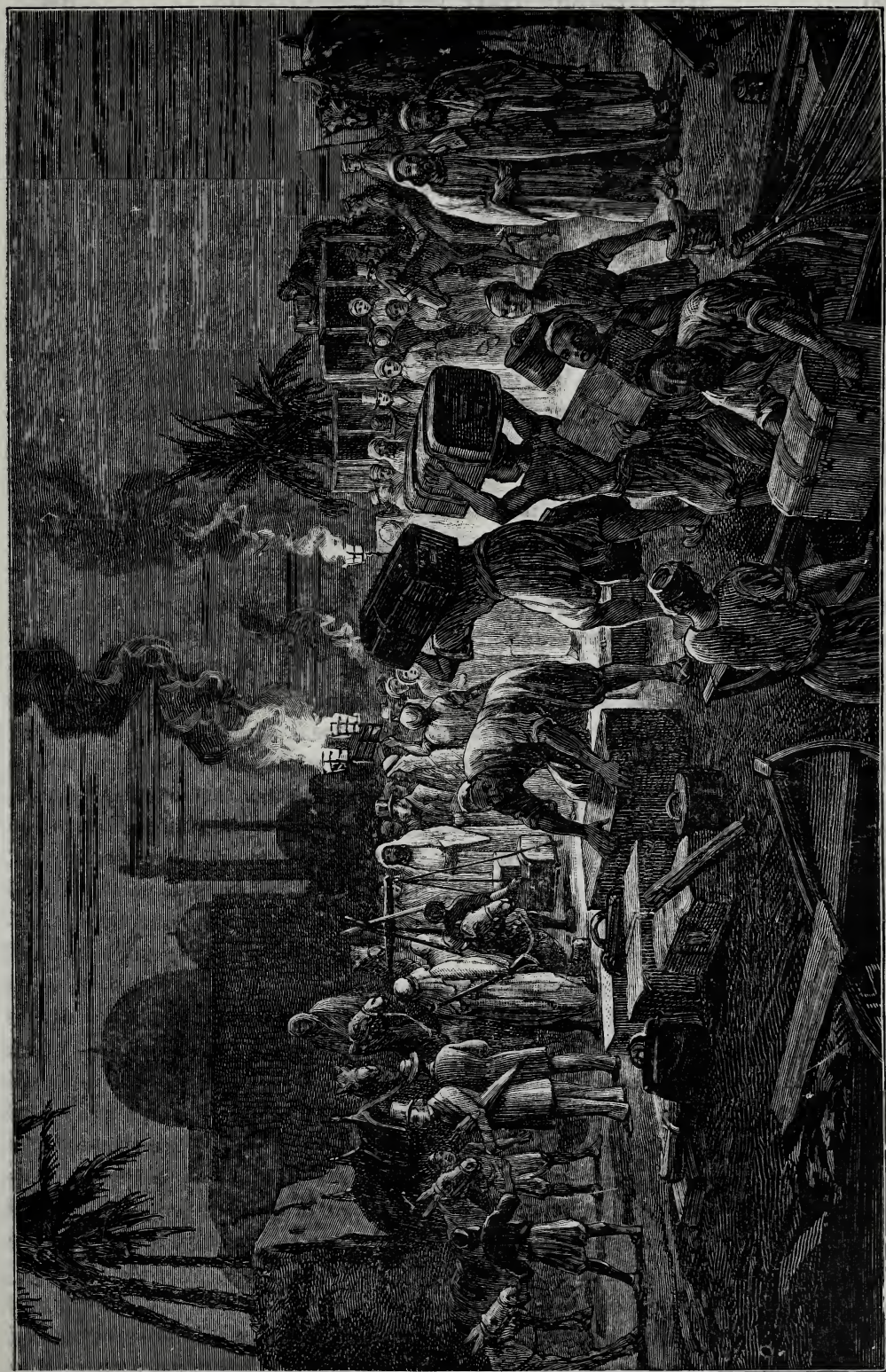
Borneo and Sir James Brooke—Cession of Labuan to Great Britain—"Constitutionalism" in the Sandwich Islands—State of the Colonies—Unsuccessful Attack on Madagascar—Commencement of the Overland Route to India—Decline in the Popularity of Sir Robert Peel—Rise of Mr. Disraeli and the Young England Party—Generous Support of Peel by the Queen and Prince Albert—Offer of the Garter to Sir Robert, which he declines—Position of the Premier towards the Aristocracy—Increasing Weakness of the Government—Dangerous State of Ireland—Prince Albert on the Political Situation—Visit of the Queen to Belgium and Prussia—Splendid Reception in the latter Country—Speech of the King of Prussia at Bonn—The Illuminations at Cologne—Prince Albert and Baron von Humboldt—Reception of the Royal Visitors in Bavaria, at Coburg, and at Gotha—The Queen at the Native Place of her Husband—Excursion to the Thuringian Forest—Other Incidents of the German Visit—Second Visit of the Queen and Prince Albert to Louis Philippe at the Château d'Eu—Duplicity of the King—Return of the Royal Party to England—Spread of Railway Enterprise in Great Britain—The Railway Mania and Panic of 1845-6—Increasing Strength of the Free Trade Movement—The Potato Disease in Ireland—Threatenings of Famine—Sir Robert Peel and Free Trade—Letter of Lord John Russell to the Electors of the City of London—Ministerial Crisis—Return of Sir Robert Peel to Power.

A GREAT Empire, so long as the vigour of its people survives, is continually spreading in new directions—sometimes by indefensible means, at other times by methods which may be justified in accordance with the ordinary nature of human affairs. In the early years of Queen Victoria's reign considerable activity was shown in the eastern parts of Asia, and some important additions were made to the British possessions. Borneo—the largest island in the world, next to Australia—was brought under the notice of Englishmen, about 1841, by the proceedings of an adventurous explorer. Until then it had been very little known in Great Britain, although discovered by the Portuguese as far back as 1518. The Dutch traded there during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; but the distant situation of the island, in the middle of the China Seas, restricted the intercourse of Europeans with its people. The adjacent waters swarmed with pirates, who not only robbed, but committed the most extreme atrocities; and the evil was not firmly taken in hand until a retired Anglo-Indian officer, named James Brooke, resolved to put down buccaneering in the Eastern Archipelago. Providing himself with a large yacht (which, being attached to the Royal Yacht Squadron, possessed in foreign seas the privileges of a ship of war), he practised his crew for about three years in the Mediterranean and other European seas, and departed for the East near the end of October, 1838. Arriving at Sarawak, he and his men lent their aid to the Sultan of Borneo in suppressing an insurrection among the Dyaks, a savage race, distinct from the ruling tribe, who are Malays. In acknowledgment of his services Brooke was made Rajah and Governor of Sarawak in September, 1841, and used his power in efforts to improve the laws and civilise the people. He also obtained the assistance of various British ships of war in the extirpation of piracy, and many persons were slaughtered

on the allegation that they were freebooters. At a somewhat later date the English Rajah quarrelled with the Sultan, attacked his capital city, took it by storm, and put the whole army to flight. The Sultan was afterwards reinstated; but Sir James Brooke (as he afterwards became) still held his position as Rajah of Sarawak. The upshot of all these adventures, so far as this period of Queen Victoria's reign is concerned, was that, in the course of 1846, a treaty was concluded with the Sultan, through the instrumentality of Brooke, by which the island of Labuan, to the north-west of Borneo, was, together with its dependencies, ceded to the British Empire, as a naval station between India and China. A money payment was made to the Sultan, and Sir James Brooke acted for a time as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Labuan. His conduct, however, was much impugned in Parliament by Messrs. Hume and Cobden, who maintained that many innocent persons had been slain, under pretence of their being pirates, and that the inducement to these acts was the "head-money" paid by the British Government to the sailors. These charges, though seemingly not improbable, were never distinctly proved; but the money payment was wisely abolished.

Travelling still farther from home, we find the Sandwich Islands offered to Great Britain by their king, Kamehameha III., in 1843. Some British subjects had claims against this chieftain, which he knew not how else to meet. The offer was not accepted; but the islands were taken under British protection, and formed into a kind of semi-independent State, with a ridiculous travesty of so-called "Constitutional" government. Two Houses of Parliament were appointed, and met for the first time on the 20th of May, 1845. The dusky-coloured sovereign delivered a speech from the throne, and told his people that it was their possession of the Word of God which had introduced them into the family of nations. All these assumptions of European modes sound extremely ludicrous; yet, since those days, the Sandwich islanders have got on fairly well, so that Kamehameha was not altogether without justification in his hopeful anticipations. To the minds of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, the enlargement of the area of civilisation, under the ægis of the British Empire, must have been profoundly interesting. But there were parts of our actual dominions, peopled by men of English race, where the right of self-government was not enjoyed at all. In 1845, we had forty-two colonies, of which only twenty-five had representative institutions, and those of a very incomplete character. The consequence was seen in continual complaints of misgovernment, corruption, and tyranny; and successive Colonial Secretaries seem to have been equally indifferent to the just demands of their countrymen beyond the seas.

In May, 1845, a new convention was concluded between England and France for the better suppression of the slave trade. A little later in the same year, a French and English squadron made a somewhat futile demonstration off Madagascar, an island on the south-eastern coast of Africa. Madagascar,



THE OVERLAND ROUTE—SCENE AT BOULAK. (See p. 190.)

like the Sandwich Islands, had been to a great extent Christianised for some years past; but in 1835 a reactionary policy set in, under the vigorous incitements of Queen Ranavalona, and the English missionaries were compelled to leave. Ten years later, the native laws were applied to such European settlers as had been suffered to remain—an unfortunate result of the combined French and English attack on the sea-coasts. During these operations, some forts and part of a town were destroyed; but, on the whole, the expedition was unsuccessful, and the native Christians suffered from the exasperation of feeling thus engendered.

Much more satisfactory, as regarded our intercourse with the Oriental world, was the inauguration of the Overland Route to and from India, due to the enterprise of Lieutenant Waghorn, who, on the 31st of October, 1845, arrived in London with the Bombay Mail of the 1st of that month. His despatches had reached Suez on the 19th, and Alexandria on the 20th of October; and from the latter of those cities he proceeded by steamboat to the European continent, when, hurrying post through Austria, Baden, Bavaria, Prussia, and Belgium, he reached London at half-past four on the morning of October 31st. The speed of the Overland Route was afterwards increased; but it had the disadvantage of greater expense. The difference between the old and the new system consisted in the fact that by the former it was necessary to pursue the long sea-route by the Cape of Good Hope, and so round the western coasts of Africa and Europe; whereas, by Lieutenant Waghorn's system, the passengers and luggage were carried by land across the Isthmus of Suez and transferred to another vessel on the northern shore. Hence the extensive operations of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, with which modern visitors to the East are so well acquainted.

While these important things were being done in distant parts of the world, the state of political affairs in England was becoming somewhat complicated. The popularity of Sir Robert Peel had, by 1845, greatly declined from the mark at which it stood in 1841. Thousands of persons complained of the Income Tax—of the unfairness of its incidence, the heaviness of its burden, and the inquisitorial character inseparable from its operation. The objectors did not sufficiently consider that the imposition of this tax had enabled the Premier to abolish many millions of duties upon articles of ordinary consumption. The boon was accepted with silent gratitude; but the price by which it had been purchased was assailed in terms of unmeasured vituperation. Such was the view taken by a large majority of the public, and at the same time Sir Robert Peel had to encounter the assaults of many prominent members of the party to which he himself belonged, whose animosity was excited by his manifest leaning towards a Free Trade policy, and by other tendencies which had far more of a Liberal than a Conservative character. It was now that Mr. Disraeli began to acquire that commanding force in Parliament which he never ceased to exercise until his

death in 1881. The days had long gone by when he was unable to obtain a hearing in the House of Commons; when his voice was drowned by hoots, and his awkward flights of rhetoric were met with peals of laughter. He had developed a style of remarkable pungency and vigour; and perhaps no one in the Lower House, at that time, possessed so remarkable a power of launching those barbed arrows of sarcasm which never fail to strike, and which usually leave a scar behind.

In the opinion of Mr. Disraeli and his followers, Sir Robert Peel was a traitor, who had obtained office on the understanding that he was to support some form of Protection, and all the other principles of the Conservative party, but who was now unquestionably moving in the opposite direction. The truth is that the Tory party was splitting up into two camps, both of which differed a good deal from the old connection. Peel and his adherents were becoming to a great extent Liberals in their political ideas, though with some differences from the Whig party; the rest of the Tories, consisting of ardent and enthusiastic young men, were endeavouring to form a body which they called "Young England." This association of Conservative Reformers had arisen some few years before; but it was only now beginning to attract general attention. The leader of this party was Mr. Disraeli, who expounded its principles in several novels, but particularly in "Coningsby," first published in 1844. Other prominent members were Lord John Manners, Mr. George Smythe (afterwards the seventh Lord Strangford), Lord George Bentinck, Mr. Henry Hope, son of the author of "Anastasius," Mr. Monckton Milnes (better known in later times as Lord Houghton), and some others less generally recognised. The essential principles of these gentlemen were Aristocracy and Churchism. Their ideal was found in the Middle Ages, or at any rate in a period not much later; but, together with some genuine sympathy with the poor, and some views which may have been needed as a counteraction to the excessive utilitarianism of the past forty years, it cannot be denied that a large amount of weak sentimentality was mixed up with the opinions and methods of the reformers. With all their earnestness and all their wit, the Young Englanders could not keep their system going for more than a handful of years.

Under all the difficulties of the time, it was an immense consolation to Sir Robert Peel to know that he had the hearty support of her Majesty and Prince Albert. This was the more valuable as the first association of the Conservative chief with the head of the State had been, as the reader is aware, of a delicate and unpleasant character. While still under the influence of Lord Melbourne, it is evident that the Queen had no great liking for Sir Robert Peel. His opposition to the sovereign in the Bedchamber question left a feeling of soreness, which lasted some time after the incident had ceased to agitate the public mind; and the cold manners of Peel might have proved an obstacle to cordial relations between that politician and his Royal

mistress. But all such difficulties were overcome when a more intimate acquaintance with the former had shown the latter how sterling and admirable were his qualities. By 1845 her Majesty had acquired as great a regard for Sir Robert as she had formerly entertained for Lord Melbourne. She felt a warm sympathy with her Conservative Minister in the difficulties he had to encounter from a somewhat factious Opposition, and, acting under this feeling, she sent to him, in March, 1845, a letter she had received from King Leopold, speaking very highly of his measures. In replying to this communication, Peel observed:—"His Majesty has an intimate knowledge of this country, and is just so far removed from the scene of political contention here as to be able to take a clear and dispassionate view of the motives and acts of public men." The writer added that he looked to no other reward, apart from her Majesty's favourable opinion, than that posterity should confirm the judgment of King Leopold—namely, that Sir Robert Peel had used the power committed to him for the maintenance of the honour and just prerogatives of the Crown, and the advancement of the public welfare. In concluding his reply, the Premier acknowledged the "generous confidence and support" which he had invariably received from her Majesty.

The rancour exhibited by a large portion of his own party, in opposing the increased grant to Maynooth, was so excessive that the Queen felt a great desire to bestow some special favour on Sir Robert Peel, as a mark of her confidence and esteem. She wished to confer on him the Order of the Garter, but, feeling doubtful how far this would meet the wishes of the Premier himself, requested Lord Aberdeen to sound him on the topic. Peel questioned, and wisely so, whether this honour would be of any service to him as a public man. Indeed, he considered that it would probably have the contrary effect; and he therefore declined the perilous distinction. In thanking her Majesty for the offer, he observed that he sprang from the people, was essentially a man of the people, and felt that in his case such an honour would be misapplied. His heart, he said, was not set upon titles of honour, or social distinctions; and the only reward he desired on quitting the service of her Majesty was that she should say to him, "You have been a faithful servant, and have done your duty to your country and to myself." Sir Robert Peel was the son of a Lancashire manufacturer who, being also a member of the House of Commons, and a politician not wholly undistinguished in his day, had been created a Baronet in 1800. The mother of the future Premier was the daughter of another manufacturer; so that the second Sir Robert Peel had every reason to describe himself as essentially a plebeian. There would have been no harm in his accepting the Garter, but it was certainly more in accordance with the simplicity and genuineness of his nature to decline it. It is not improbable that something of the merely external coldness of Peel's nature (for in the recesses of that nature he was not cold)

may have been due to what Dr. Johnson admirably called "defensive pride." The slightest compromise of his own dignity might possibly have drawn down upon him the supercilious taunts of the aristocratic party which he led.



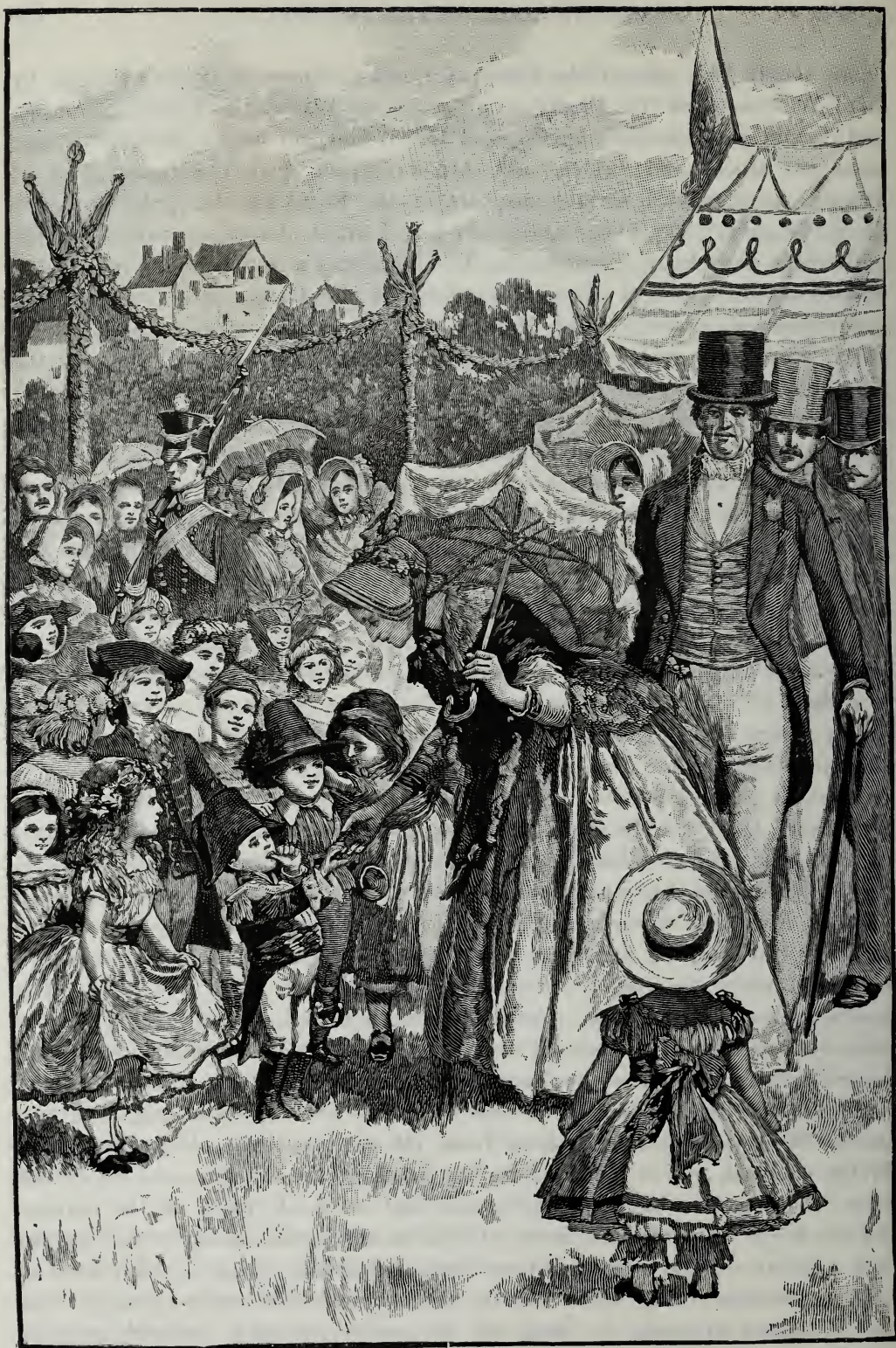
VIEW IN MALINES.

By dint of his powerful intellect and unrelenting industry, Sir Robert Peel managed to keep the Government on its feet during the Session of 1845. But he knew well that the days of the Cabinet were numbered, and, through the medium of Lord Aberdeen, he prepared her Majesty and Prince Albert for the Ministerial crisis which he felt sure would not be long in coming. The malcontent members of his own party might at any moment coalesce with

the Whigs, and upset the Administration. Moreover, he had taken too much upon himself, and was beginning to feel the strain. The time had been when he was of opinion that the Prime Minister of England should always be in the House of Commons; but he now perceived that his position in that chamber entailed an amount of work which no human being could long sustain. Sometimes he thought of trying to effect a combination between the more liberal Conservatives and the Whigs; but the task would not have been easy, and would probably have failed in its operation. He went on, therefore, with heroic resolve, but with an ever-increasing conviction that a crisis must arrive before many months were over. The efforts to conciliate the Irish by the increase of the Maynooth grant, the establishment of the Queen's Colleges, and other measures, had failed as utterly as all such efforts invariably do. Ireland was again becoming disaffected, and the Queen was once more obliged to postpone indefinitely her contemplated visit to that island. The Corporation of Dublin had in May presented an address to her Majesty, requesting that she would visit their country, and promising her a welcome of the utmost warmth and the most perfect unanimity. But the Queen replied evasively that "whenever she might be enabled to receive in Ireland the promised welcome, she should rely with confidence upon the loyalty and affection of her faithful subjects." No date was mentioned for the promised visit, and undoubtedly the state of Ireland was such that it would have been imprudent on the part of the Sovereign to venture within the range of so many possible dangers. The agitation for Repeal had again sprung up; agrarian crimes were frequent; and the potato-disease was beginning to show itself, to an extent which made thoughtful men apprehensive of the future. The Queen therefore resolved to take her holiday on the Continent, and proceed up the Rhine to Saxony. She could not depart, however, until the prorogation of Parliament, and in the meanwhile there were many causes of anxiety. "In politics," said Prince Albert, writing to Baron Stockmar on the 18th of July, 1845, "we are drawing near the close of one of the most remarkable sittings of Parliament. Peel has carried through everything with immense majorities; but it is certain he has no longer any stable Parliamentary support. His party is quite broken up, and the Opposition has as many different opinions and principles as heads." The Session came to an end on the 9th of August, and the same evening her Majesty and Prince Albert sailed from Woolwich for Antwerp in the Royal yacht. The fine old city was reached at six o'clock on the evening of the 10th, amidst a downpour of rain. Nevertheless, the place was illuminated after the primitive fashion so often seen on the Continent. The same cheerless weather continued next day, when the Royal party landed. Proceeding by rail to Malines, the visitors were there met by the King and Queen of the Belgians, who accompanied them as far as Verviers. Guards of honour saluted at every station, and the frequent tunnels were illuminated with lamps and torches.

At length they gained the Prussian frontier, where the train was met by Lord Westmoreland (the English Ambassador at Berlin), the Chevalier Bunsen, and certain gentlemen of the Prussian Court who had been appointed to wait upon the Queen and Prince. At Aix-la-Chapelle they found the King of Prussia, together with several members of the Royal Family. "In the room of the station," writes the Queen, in her Journal, "were assembled all the authorities, the clergy, Catholic and Lutheran, and a number of young ladies dressed in white, one of whom, a daughter of the Burgomaster, recited some complimentary verses." Her Majesty and the Prince, together with their party, afterwards visited the Cathedral and other memorial edifices, and the journey was resumed in the evening. The reception at Cologne was especially cordial and impressive, and from that city the Royal party soon reached the station at Brühl. Here the English visitors went into one of the saloons of the Palace to listen to the splendid tattoo performed by five hundred military musicians. The room was illuminated with torches, and with lamps of coloured glass, and the whole effect was most splendid. At Bonn they attended the inauguration of the Beethoven statue, and were serenaded by an enormous orchestra, consisting of sixty military bands. At four o'clock on the same day, a grand banquet was given at the Palace, on which occasion the Prussian King made a speech, in which he said:—"Gentlemen, fill your glasses! There is a word of inexpressible sweetness to British as well as to German hearts. Thirty years ago it echoed on the heights of Waterloo from British and German tongues, after days of hot and desperate fighting, to mark the glorious triumph of our brotherhood in arms. Now it resounds on the banks of our fair Rhine, amid the blessings of that peace which was the hallowed fruit of the great conflict. That word is *Victoria!*" His Majesty then drank to the health of the Queen and Prince Albert; and the former, who was much affected, rose, bent towards the King, and kissed his cheek.

After the banquet, the Royal party returned by rail to Cologne, and there embarked on a steamer to witness the illuminations from the river. The spectacle was of the most splendid description, and, as reflected from the waters of the Rhine, appeared doubly glorious. "As darkness closed in," says a writer, who seems to have caught the spirit of the scene, "the dim and fetid city began to put forth buds of light. Lines of twinkling brightness darted like liquid gold and silver from pile to pile, then along the famous bridge of boats, across the river, up the masts of the shipping, and all abroad upon the opposite bank. Rockets now shot from all parts of the horizon. As the Royal party glided down the river, the banks blazed with fireworks and musketry. The Cathedral burst forth a building of light, every detail of the architecture being made out in delicately-coloured lamps—pinkish with an underglow of orange." Some of the houses appeared absolutely red-hot, and the beauty of the scene was so extraordinary that the spectators forgot the drizzle of rain which was gradually wetting them through. A day or two



THE QUEEN AND PRINCE ALBERT AT THE CHILDREN'S FÊTE IN COBURG ON
ST. GREGORY'S DAY.

later, the Queen and her companions steamed up the Rhine—an illustrious party, consisting of three Queens, two Kings, a Prince Consort, an Archduke, and the Prince and Princess, who, in 1871, became Emperor and Empress of Germany. Amongst persons distinguished for intellect was the Baron von Humboldt, for whom Prince Albert entertained a profound admiration, but who appears not to have reciprocated this feeling. The Prince was unaware of the fact at that time; but after the death of Humboldt, in 1859, some letters of that famous man were published in Germany, and in one of these, written on the 27th of February, 1847, Humboldt says:—"I am severe only with the great ones, and this man [Prince Albert] made an uncomfortable impression upon me at Stolzenfels. 'I know,' he said to me, 'that you sympathise greatly with the misfortunes of the Russian Poles. Unfortunately, the Poles are as little deserving of our sympathy as the Irish.'" The Prince was much annoyed at the publication of remarks which he had made in private; moreover, he denied that his words had been correctly reported. It would seem that he had made some observations on the faults of character common to both races; but it is not likely that he expressed himself in the sweeping manner described by Humboldt.

In Bavaria, at Coburg and Gotha, and in other parts of Germany, the reception given to the Queen was equally enthusiastic. Coming near to Coburg, on the 18th of August, the English Sovereign felt deeply moved and agitated at approaching the native place of her husband. On their arrival, the Royal visitors were welcomed by Ernest, Duke of Coburg, who was dressed in full uniform. "At the entrance to the town," writes her Majesty, "we came to a triumphal arch, where Herr Bergner, the Burgomaster, addressed us, and was quite overcome. On the other side stood a number of young girls dressed in white, with green wreaths and scarfs, who presented us with bouquets and verses. I cannot say how much I felt moved on entering this dear old place, and with difficulty I restrained my emotion. The beautifully ornamented town, all bright with wreaths and flowers, the numbers of good, affectionate people, the many recollections connected with the place—all was so affecting. In the Platz, where the Rathhaus and Regierungshaus are (which are fine and curious old houses), the clergy were assembled, and Ober-Superintendent Genzler addressed us very kindly—a very young-looking man of his age, for he married mamma to my father, and christened and confirmed Albert and Ernest." Arriving at the Palace, they were received by such a crowd of relatives that, as the Queen records, "the staircase was full of cousins." The occasion was interesting and pleasant; but it was overmastered by a feeling of sadness, consequent on the recent death of Prince Albert's father, and this mournful sentiment was intensified when the Royal visitors drove to the Rosenau, the favourite country seat of the late Duke, where Prince Albert himself had been born. This residence was now fitted up for the use of the Queen and her husband during their stay at Coburg; but, "every sound, every view, every

step we take," writes the former, "makes us think of him [the late Duke], and feel an indescribable, hopeless longing for him." The visitors were shown over the fortress which guards the town of Coburg, and were much interested in beholding the room once occupied by Luther, in which his chair and a portion of his bed are still preserved. On the 20th of August—the festival of St. Gregorius—the Royal party were present at the children's fête invariably given in honour of that day. The behaviour of the little boys and girls appears to have been most exemplary, and the occasion was a very joyous one.

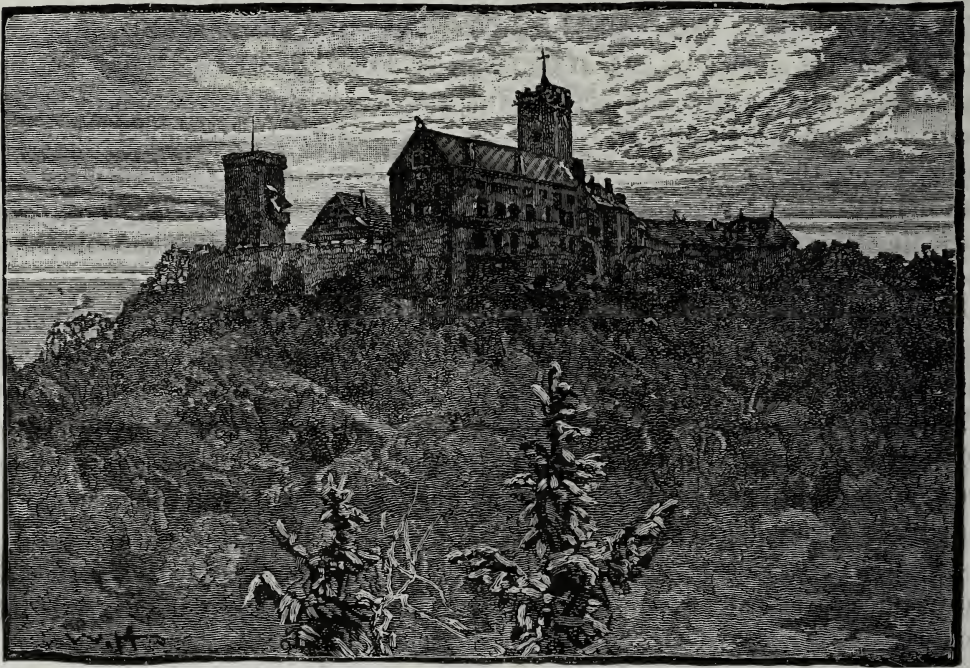
Many other festivities marked the stay of the Queen and Prince Albert at the Rosenau. The 26th of August, the anniversary of the Prince's birth, was spent in the house where he had first seen the light, and many of the peasants, in gala dress, came to the house with wreaths, nosegays, and hearty congratulations. On the following day, the Royal visitors left the Rosenau with heavy hearts, and proceeded to Reinhardtsbrunn, the scenery surrounding which gave her Majesty the keenest pleasure. Thence they went on to Gotha, and on the following day (August 30th) made an excursion to the Thuringian Forest, the beauties of which are not easily to be matched. In the heart of the forest, a beautiful pavilion, ornamented with branches of fir and interwoven wreaths of flowers and laurels, was found awaiting the distinguished visitors. Here, to the music of a fine band, a great *battue* of game took place, with the result that fifty-five animals, of which thirty-one were stags, were stretched dead or wounded on the turf. It was a shocking exhibition, and the Queen records in her Journal that none of the gentlemen liked it. Nevertheless, they took part in it, and opinion in England was rather strongly expressed against such a method of emphasising a holiday. The visit to Germany, however, had, on the whole, been most delightful, and when the time came for departure, the Queen could hardly bear to think that she must leave. Gotha was quitted on the 3rd of September, and, on their return journey, the Queen and Prince Albert halted at Eisenach, where the Grand Duke of Weimar took them to the historic castle of Wartburg, where Luther spent many months of seclusion at a period of great danger to himself, and where they were shown, together with the table at which he wrote, and the wedding-ring which he wore, the dark mark upon the wall where he threw his inkstand at a visionary devil. The rest of the journey was rapidly performed; but, before returning to England, the Queen had to pay a second visit to Louis Philippe at the Château d'Eu.

At Tréport, which they reached on the morning of September 8th, her Majesty and the Prince were received by the French Sovereign. On reaching the Château, they found that one of the rooms had been fitted up, in honour of her Majesty's former visit, with pictures illustrating what had then happened, with others having reference to the King's own visit to Windsor, and with portraits by Winterhalter of the Queen and Prince Albert. The whole company of the Opéra Comique had been brought down from Paris, and, in a temporary theatre constructed in the grounds, two lively French operas were performed in the

evening. This second visit to Louis Philippe was extremely short, for, on the evening of the next day (September 9th), it came to a close. The King rowed in his barge to the Queen's yacht, and, while Prince Albert went to show the Prince de Joinville a smaller yacht, called the *Fairy*, the French monarch entered into conversation with her Majesty and Lord Aberdeen on the subject of the Spanish marriages. "The King," records Queen Victoria in her Journal, "told Lord Aberdeen, as well as me, he never would hear of Montpensier's marriage with the Infanta of Spain (which they are in a great fright about in England) until it was no longer a political question, which would be when the Queen is married, and has children. This is very satisfactory. . . . When Albert came back with Joinville, which was about seven o'clock, the King said he must go; and they all took leave, the King embracing me again and again. We saw and heard the King land. The sun had set, and in a very short while there was the most beautiful moonlight, exquisitely reflected on the water. We walked up and down, and Lord Aberdeen was full of the extreme success of our whole tour, which had gone off charmingly, including this little visit, which had been most successful." Lord Aberdeen was a Minister very easily satisfied with the promises of foreign Powers; but it must be admitted that, after so specific a statement as that of Louis Philippe with reference to his son, the Duc de Montpensier, it was not easy to suppose that in about a year he would act in direct contradiction of his pledged word. The visit, however, had been paid; the words had been uttered; and on the 10th of September the Queen again reached England, reinvigorated by her tour, and fully satisfied that nothing unpleasant was likely to occur with respect to Spain and France.

Towards the close of 1845, the whole of England was much disturbed by an unwholesome extension of railway enterprise, which ended in a panic and an alarming crash. Only fifteen years had elapsed since the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, which, though not absolutely the first of iron roads, was the earliest to attract general attention. But in that brief period railways had been pushed forward in many directions, and had become the most important means of communication in the country. They appealed to all classes and to all interests, and on Easter Monday, 1844, the system of cheap excursion trips, with return tickets, was added to the other attractions of this method of conveyance. The great landowners did not like the innovation; for in many instances their ancestral parks were cut through by the relentless engineer, and, although the persons so injured received money compensation, there are certain troubles which the guinea will not cure. Those, also, who lived in remote and picturesque districts, disliked to see their solitudes invaded by a smoky engine, a rattling train of carriages, and perhaps a somewhat vulgar and tumultuous crowd. The poet Wordsworth was desperately offended at this desecration of his beloved Lake district; and doubtless many other persons had the same feeling, without

being able to express it in the form of an eloquent sonnet. A great deal of allowance must be made for this very natural sentiment; yet the interests of a whole people could not be set aside for any such considerations. The work of constructing railways went on, and for a time the speculations were of a healthy and legitimate character. But in 1844-45 a number of bubble companies arose, which originated in dishonest greed, and had nothing but a swindler's success for their object. The country seemed to go mad about railways. Every newspaper overflowed with advertisements of new projects;



THE CASTLE OF THE WARTBURG.

every beggar thought he was going to be a millionaire. Parliament had but recently taken the control of railways under its supervision; defining the limit of fares, arranging other matters of detail in the interest of the public, and requiring that, before any company could come into operation, it should deposit at the Board of Trade a specific account, accompanied by sketches, plans, and sections of the lines, of the objects which it proposed to effect, and the means by which those objects were to be carried out. The last day on which these accounts could be rendered was November 30th, 1845. It happened to be Sunday—a circumstance overlooked when the arrangement was made; but all day long the proposed schemes came pouring in, and when at length the doors were closed at midnight, those who had arrived too late rang the bell, and, the moment they found an opportunity, flung their plans into the hall, only to see them thrown out again. The total number of railway

schemes thus lodged at the Board of Trade, before the end of the closing day, was 788. Many of these were bubble companies, floated by swindling and often poverty-stricken speculators, who found a number of persons simple enough to take shares, and pay money for them. When the crash was imminent, the vagabonds made off with their gains, and the credulous shareholders had to put up with their loss. One of the great leaders of railway



GEORGE WILSON, CHAIRMAN OF THE ANTI-CORN-LAW LEAGUE.

enterprise in those days was Mr. George Hudson, a draper of York, with a genius for this kind of speculation, in which he made an enormous fortune. There can be no doubt that the railway enterprise of England was largely advanced by the labours and abilities of this person, who was the chairman of numerous companies; but in a subsequent year it was considered that he had misappropriated a large-sum of money, and he was compelled to refund no less a sum than £190,000.

Since the resumption of office by Sir Robert Peel in 1841, the Free Trade agitation had made immense advances, and one of the most gifted champions of the cause, Mr. John Bright, had first appeared in Parliament during the summer of 1843. It is probable that Mr. Bright understood the whole case

for Free Trade as well as Mr. Cobden himself; and, even if his powers of exposition were not so irresistibly logical and lucid as those of his friend, he had a power of passionate, and even poetic, eloquence to which the other made no pretence, and which was equally effective whether on a platform or in the House of Commons. We have already seen that Sir Robert Peel was rapidly abandoning Protection, and the Free Trade party naturally gained confidence and vigour from so illustrious a convert. Their ideas had evidently taken hold of the popular mind, excepting, strange to say, that section of the people which had adopted the views of Chartism. Money to any amount seemed at the command of the reformers, and in a commercial country like England the possession of money is one of the best of arguments. On the 8th of May, 1845, an exhibition of agricultural products, implements, &c., and also of manufactured articles, was opened in Covent Garden Theatre, under the title of the Free Trade Bazaar. The whole of the pit and stage was boarded over; at the close of the vista thus created was an imitation painted window of the cathedral type; and the space thus utilised, as distinguished from the public part of the house, was fitted out as a Gothic Hall. The exhibition was open seventeen days, during which time about 100,000 people visited the Bazaar, and the monetary result was that £25,046 were added to the funds of the League. It is thought that this Bazaar suggested the first idea of the Great Exhibition which attracted the attention of the whole civilised world six years later. Of course the Protectionists laughed at the whole thing as theatrical; but it helped to familiarise Londoners with the idea of Free Trade—an important fact, as London was at that time behind the towns of the North in devotion to the new commercial policy. After May, 1845, the cause of Free Trade made rapid advances in the capital, and it seemed almost like a race between the two great political parties as to which should take it up.

Another circumstance which worked in favour of the reformers was the rapid approach of the potato-disease in Ireland, which in the next two years resulted in one of the most terrible famines known to modern history. The condition of the potato crops began to attract serious attention in the month of August, when indications of its existence were visible, not only in Ireland, but in England. The evil, however, proved far worse in the former than in the latter country. On the 13th of October, Sir Robert Peel wrote to Sir James Graham:—"The accounts of the state of the potato crop in Ireland are becoming very alarming. I foresee the necessity that may be impressed upon us, at an early period, of considering whether there is not that well-grounded apprehension of actual scarcity that justifies and compels the adoption of every means of relief which the exercise of the prerogative or legislation might afford. I have no confidence in such remedies as the prohibition of exports, or the stoppage of distilleries. The removal of impediments to import is the only effectual remedy." This was a clear advance towards the adoption of

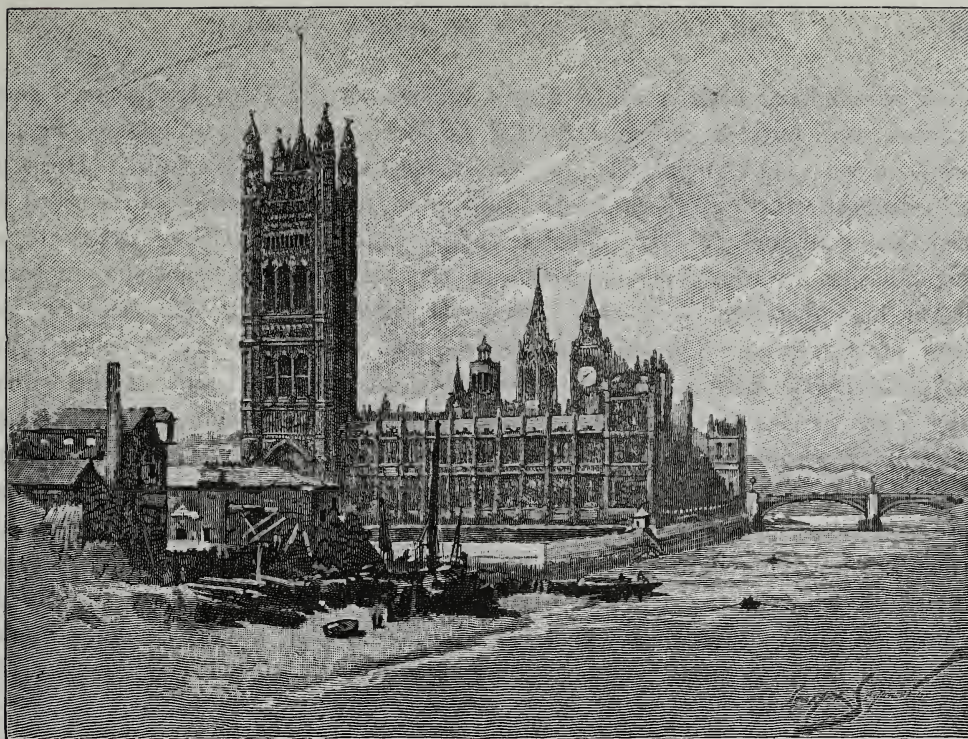
Free Trade in corn, which Sir Robert had previously resisted, and which he still postponed for several months. On the 31st of October we find a meeting at Dublin representing to the Lord Lieutenant that it had ascertained beyond a doubt that famine, and consequent pestilence, were imminent, unless the Government should take the most prompt measures to provide for the people by the distribution of food. It was therefore requested that the ports of Ireland should be opened for the importation of Indian corn, rice, and other articles of consumption. Sir Robert Peel was already convinced that it was impossible, under existing circumstances, to maintain restrictions on the free import of grain; but he still hung back from taking a different course, deterred, probably, by a doubt as to how far he could obtain a majority in Parliament.

His hesitation in this respect, which was now beginning to be denounced in Ireland in very emphatic terms, appeared to Lord John Russell to offer a fitting opportunity for effecting the restoration of the Whigs to office. By this time, Lord Melbourne had almost retired from public life, and everybody knew that, if the Liberals again came into power, the Premiership would fall to the most able, energetic, and resolute of Melbourne's lieutenants. Lord John Russell saw a great career before him, and on the 22nd of November he addressed a letter from Edinburgh to the electors of the City of London. It will be recollected that the Whig statesman, shortly before the destruction of the Melbourne Cabinet, had been in favour of a fixed, though a low, duty on corn, while his great rival, Sir Robert Peel, had adopted what was known as the Sliding Scale. The views of both leaders had altered since those days. Each had abandoned his hobby; but Lord John Russell was the first to proclaim unequivocally that he was a convert to the views of Mr. Cobden. In his Edinburgh letter, he wrote:—"It is no longer worth while to contend for a fixed duty. In 1841, the Free Trade party would have agreed to a duty of 8s. per quarter on wheat, and after a lapse of years this duty might have been further reduced, and ultimately abolished. But the imposition of any duty at present, without a provision for its extinction within a short period, would but prolong a contest already sufficiently fruitful of animosity and discontent. Let us, then, unite to put an end to a system which has been proved to be the blight of commerce, the bane of agriculture, the source of bitter division amongst classes, the cause of penury, fever, mortality, and crime among the people."

The hesitation of Sir Robert Peel, though unfortunate both for himself and the country, was scarcely avoidable under the circumstances. He would have thrown open the ports at once by an Order in Council; but several of his colleagues in the Government were opposed to such a proceeding, and even to the adoption of any Free Trade policy whatever. The publication of Lord John Russell's letter, however, brought matters to a crisis. It is true that by this time most of the objecting members of the Administration had come round to the Premier's view; but Peel felt that he could not place

himself in the position of adopting a policy which his rival had so openly espoused. Convinced of his inability, at that time, to carry out the Free Trade ideas which he nevertheless saw to be inevitable, Sir Robert went to Osborne on the 5th of December, 1845, and placed his resignation in the hands of her Majesty. "I trust," says the Conservative Minister in his *Memoirs*, "that I satisfied the Queen that I was influenced by considerations of the public interest, and not by fear of responsibility or of reproach, in humbly tendering my resignation of office. Her Majesty was pleased to accept it, with marks of confidence and approbation which, however gratifying, made it a very painful act to replace in her Majesty's hands the trust she had confided in me." The Queen then requested Lord John Russell to form a Government; but, being still in Edinburgh, it was the 11th of December before that statesman could reach the south. He at once undertook the task assigned to him; but, as some of his political friends were disinclined to support the general lines of policy on which he desired to enter, or were unable to agree among themselves, the attempt ended in failure. Another difficulty resulted from the refusal of Sir Robert Peel to give an unconditional promise that he would support a measure for the total and immediate abolition of the Corn Laws, though he was willing to assure Lord John that he and his friends would abstain from any factious opposition.

On the 20th of December, Lord John Russell announced to her Majesty that he was unable to form an Administration, and Sir Robert Peel was immediately recalled to the Royal presence at Windsor Castle. On entering the room, the Queen said to him very graciously, "So far from taking leave of you, Sir Robert, I must require you to withdraw your resignation." She added that her late Minister might naturally require time for reflection, and for communication with his colleagues, before he gave a decisive answer. "I humbly advised her Majesty," writes Sir Robert Peel, "to permit me to decide at once upon the resumption of office, and to enable me to announce to my late colleagues, on my return to London, that I had not hesitated to reaccept the appointment of First Minister." He goes on to state that the Queen was pleased cordially to approve of this suggestion, and he reached London on the evening of the 20th, once more invested with the functions of Prime Minister.



THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MINISTRY OF RENUNCIATION.

The *Times* Reveals a Secret of State—Mr. Sidney Herbert and Mrs. Norton and the *Times*—A Court Scandal—Peel's Resignation—Lord John Russell's Failure to Form a Ministry—Peel Resumes Office—The Ministry and the Queen—The Duke of Wellington and Peel—Disintegration of the Tory Party—Croker's Correspondence with Wellington—Peel's Instructions to the *Quarterly Review*—A Betrayed Editor—Peel and the Princess Lieven—Guizot's Defence of Peel—The Queen's Conduct in the Great Crisis—How she Strengthened the Position of the Crown—Her Popular Sympathies—Why Peel Changed his Policy—The Potato Rot—Impending Famine—Distress in England—The Campaign of the Free Traders—Scenes at their Meetings—The Protectionist Agitation and the Agricultural Labourers—Sufferings of the Poor—The Duke of Norfolk's Curry Powder—Meeting at Wootton Bassett—The Queen and the Sufferers.

It was on the 4th of December, 1845, that the *Times* startled the world by its celebrated leading article, beginning "The doom of the Corn Laws is sealed." This was the very earliest disclosure of that great act of political renunciation which impending famine in Ireland had forced on Sir Robert Peel. How the *Times* came to discover, on the 4th of December, that the Cabinet had broken up on the previous day, through the obstinacy of Lord Stanley and the Duke of Buccleuch, was for a long time a political mystery. It inspired what Lord Beaconsfield once called "the babble of the boudoirs," and the tittle-tattle of many clubs. It was whispered that one very near the Royal person had divulged this profound secret of State, a knowledge of

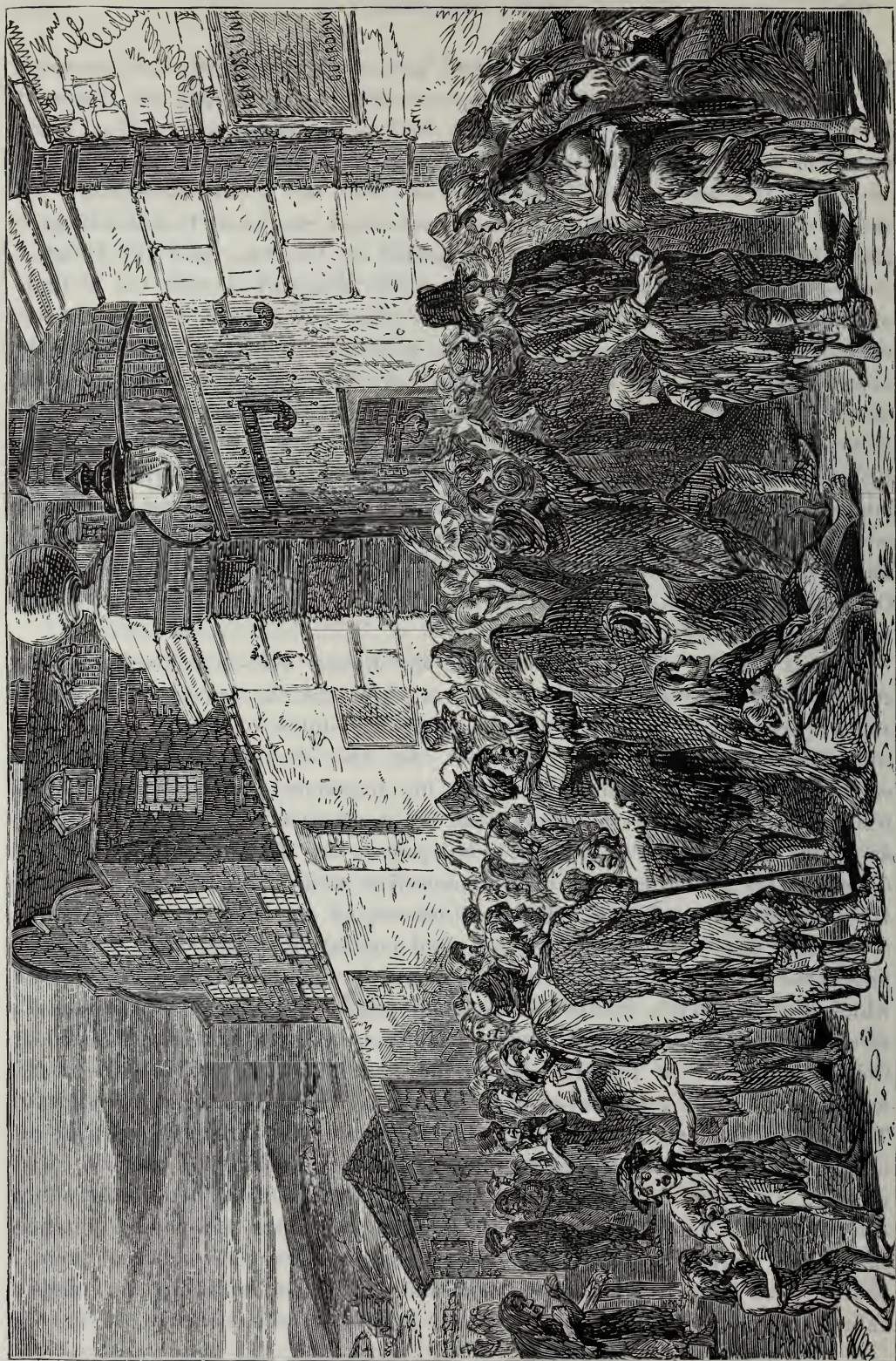
which would have been worth a king's ransom on the Corn Exchange. Such surmises were entirely wrong. So far as the Court knew, or guessed at the secret, it was kept inviolate. It was understood that Mr. Sidney Herbert, the youngest of Sir Robert Peel's colleagues, on the evening of the 3rd of December conveyed to Mrs. Norton (afterwards Lady Stirling Maxwell, of Keir) an idea of what had happened in the Cabinet, and that she, in turn, carried her gleanings from Mr. Herbert's conversation to Mr. Delane, the editor of the *Times*. The affair, it may be said in passing, has furnished Mr. George Meredith with a striking incident in his story, "*Diana of the Cross-ways*," for the heroine of that romance has much in common with the gifted *intrigante*, "whose bridal wreath was twined with weeds of strife." A more prosaic explanation, however, is supplied by Mr. Greville. He asserts that Lord Aberdeen gave Mr. Delane a hint that the Corn Law was doomed, his object being to conciliate America (which was deeply interested in the export of corn) in view of the Oregon dispute, which he was anxious to settle. It is hard to believe that a man of Lord Aberdeen's high sense of honour would, from such an inadequate motive, violate his Ministerial oath, and betray the secrets of his chief.

Lord John Russell had failed, as has been said, to form his Administration when the Cabinet of his rival broke up. Here it may now be convenient to explain the reason of that failure, which he laid before his disappointed Sovereign. On the morning of the 20th of December, when Sir Robert Peel waited on the Queen at Windsor, and was asked to withdraw his resignation, her Majesty had been disturbed by a letter from Lord John Russell, stating that he must abandon all hopes of forming a Ministry, because he had been unable "in one instance" to secure indispensable support from his more prominent followers. Who were the "prominent followers"? and who, "in one instance," thwarted the Leader of the Opposition in his effort to extricate the Queen from the difficulty in which she was entangled? The pragmatic "instance" was Lord Grey, and his refusal to serve the country in the hour of need was a matter not of principle but of personal feeling. Writing to Mr. J. F. Macfarlan, Chairman of the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, on the 22nd of December, 1845, Mr. (afterwards Lord) Macaulay told the whole story. "You will have heard," he says, "of the termination of our attempt to form a Ministry. All our plans were frustrated by Lord Grey. . . . On my own share in these transactions I reflect with unmixed satisfaction. From the first I told Lord John that I stipulated for one thing only, total and immediate Repeal. I would be as to all other matters absolutely in his hands; that I would take any office, or no office, just as it suited him best; and that he should never be disturbed by any personal pretensions or jealousies on my part. If everybody else had acted thus there would now have been a Liberal Ministry." We now know that Macaulay was mistaken. It was perfectly well known, not only to the Queen, but to the chiefs of the great parties, that Lord John

Russell could never have carried Repeal, for two reasons. He was distrusted by Free Traders like Cobden. It was impossible to expect that the House of Lords, who threatened to revolt against Wellington, would accept Free Trade from the Whigs, many of whom were eager to maintain a small fixed duty on corn. All this was quite well understood at Court, and it partially accounts for the unconcealed delight with which the Queen asked Sir Robert Peel to withdraw his resignation. It was, moreover, suspected at the time that the Court—always distrustful of Lord Palmerston—privily sympathised with the feelings of Lord Grey, who thought that the only office which Lord Palmerston was willing to accept, was precisely the one in which he would do irretrievable mischief. He had been Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and naturally he could not, with self-respect, serve another Whig Government in an inferior capacity. But Lord Grey, though quite ready to serve with Palmerston if he took some other Department, held that, if he went to the Foreign Office, his pugnacity, combined with the hostile animus which he had inspired in France, must, sooner or later, lead to a disturbance of the peace of Europe. Lord Palmerston was, in truth, the Mordecai sitting at the gate of the Whig Oligarchy, and then, as ever, Lord Grey could only co-operate comfortably with a Ministry of Greys.

It was on the 20th December that Sir Robert Peel summoned his late colleagues in Downing Street, to inform them that he had resumed office, and to invite their assistance in abolishing the duties on foreign corn. The conclave was depressed and downcast, for the situation was unique and embarrassing. Lord Stanley, true to his imperious impulses, persisted in resigning. He refused to believe that the destitution in Ireland was so bad as it was painted by Peel, and it is but just to say that his main reason for deserting his leader had no direct connection with the effect of the Corn Laws on the price of food. The real interest of the country, Lord Stanley contended, was to have a flourishing rural population. That could only exist under the shadow of a territorial aristocracy, maintained by a Corn Law which kept up rents, because it kept up prices. No conscious self-interest seems to have tainted Lord Stanley's motives, and the same may be said of Cobden and the Free Traders, who, on the other hand, believed that the world would gain by the substitution of a commercial for a territorial aristocracy. The aim of the Free Traders, in fact, was to rule the English people by an oligarchy of rich manufacturers, thus "thrusting aside the nobles," and creating "a new policy specially adapted to the life of a great trading community." * Lord Stanley's idea, however, was that the landed interest had made England; that it gave her social stability and military power; that it had won her battles by sea and land, and built up her mighty fabric of empire. The Corn Laws he believed, quite honestly, to be the

* Morley's *Life of Cobden*, Vol. I., p. 134; Vol. II., pp. 396 and 482.



THE IRISH FAMINE: STARVING PEASANTS AT A WORKHOUSE GATE.

outworks of a great system of landlordism which gave the State a solid basis. His firm conviction was that Mr. Cobden and the Leaguers were eager to capture the outworks, that they might the more easily storm the citadel. And this idea, too, was common to the Whigs, who were advocates of a duty on corn, which, though small, was to be fixed. Through Lord Melbourne they had taught the country and the Queen that a man must



LORD GEORGE BENTINCK.

be mad who would dream of abolishing the Corn Laws—and they showed no sign, as a Party, of wavering in that conviction till the 22nd of November, 1845, when Lord John Russell sent the famous “Edinburgh Letter” to his constituents in the City of London, abandoning Protection once and for ever. It is but fair to remind a later generation of the relation in which the two great Parties stood to the Corn Law, because partisan writers often present an inadequate conception of the arduous task which Peel set himself, when he undertook to abolish the Corn Duties, in defiance of beliefs long rooted in the minds not only of the people, but of the governing classes of England.

There is no denying the fact that the admirable behaviour of the Queen throughout the epoch-marking Ministerial crisis of 1845-46 did a great deal to restore the influence of the Crown as an operative factor in English politics. Since the death of George IV. that influence had been waning. Under William IV. it had been exercised, but without subtlety of tact or breadth of sympathy; and therefore, when exercised, it was somewhat rudely "abated" by the popular Party. Nothing was further from Lord Melbourne's heart than to turn the Queen into a Whig, for it is on record that it was he who urged her to conciliate the Tories, and put confidence in Peel, against whom she bore a grudge for opposing the Parliamentary grant to the Prince Consort. Yet, in the early days of the Queen's reign, the influence of the Crown was not a popular influence, because it was supposed that Melbourne had become a sort of Mayor of the Palace, and had made the Sovereign the tool of Party. In the beginning of 1846, however, we notice a remarkable change in public feeling on this subject. There was then a growing belief, even among the Tories, that their suspicions of Melbourne had been unwarrantable, and the people ceased to fear that the Queen intended to base her Government on a system of favouritism. It is of the utmost importance, says Edmund Burke, "that the discretionary powers which are necessarily vested in the monarch, whether for the execution of the laws or for the nomination to magistracy or office, or for the conducting of the affairs of peace and war, or for ordering the revenue, should all be exercised upon public principles and national grounds, and not on the likings or prejudices, the intrigues or fooleries, of a Court."* This was really the sound teaching which Melbourne had impressed on the Queen, and her bearing in the crisis, which ended in Sir Robert Peel's re-assumption of office, showed that she had been an apt pupil.

The Prince Consort was quick to notice the effect which her Majesty's unswerving fidelity to public interests at this time had produced on the country. It was therefore with pardonable pride that he wrote to Baron Stockmar† a curious letter, shrewdly pointing out that the crisis now past had been of signal advantage to the Crown. The Queen had been seen to remain calm and unmoved in the fierce and strident strife of factions—the one stable element in the Constitution at a moment when no other rallying point was visible to the nation. Albany Fonblanque, the wittiest of the Radical journalists of that day, ridiculed, to the top of his bent, the chiefs of the two great parties, whose petty rivalries and personal jealousies had thrown public affairs into sad confusion. They were, it must be confessed, rather like Rabelais' giant, who, though he habitually fed on windmills, choked on a pat of butter swallowed the wrong way. But on behalf of the Radicals, Fonblanque, it is interesting to notice now, had nothing but praise to bestow on the Queen's behaviour in the midst of the tragi-comedy of politics, which was being enacted

* Thoughts on the Present Discontents.

† Martin's Life of the Prince Consort, Vol. I., p. 315.

before the eyes of a famished people. "In all the pranks and bunglings of the last three weeks," he wrote, "there is one part which, according to all report, has been played most faultlessly—that of a Constitutional Sovereign. In the pages of history the directness, the sincerity, the scrupulous observance of Constitutional rule, which have marked her Majesty's conduct in circumstances the most trying, will have their place of honour. However unused as we are to deal in homage to Royalty, we must add that never, we believe, was the heart of a monarch so warmly devoted to the interests of a people, and with so enlightened a sense of their interests." * The Continental tour of the Queen in 1845 had suggested to the people that the personal influence of the Sovereign might, if adroitly used, be of great service to the State in conciliating foreign nations, whose goodwill it would be advantageous to secure. Her conduct in the Ministerial crisis of 1845–46, however, convinced them that, if intelligently directed, the personal influence of the Queen, in domestic politics, might also be rendered not less beneficial to her subjects and her empire.

But at the meeting in Downing Street which terminated this momentous crisis, Lord Stanley, whose place was on his resignation promptly filled by Mr. Gladstone, was the only ex-Minister who had the courage of his opinions. The Duke of Buccleuch ceased to resist the logic of facts. The Duke of Wellington, who had wavered very much, finally cast in his lot with Peel—to the amazement of all his old friends, especially of Mr. John Wilson Croker. Mr. Croker had been induced by Sir Robert Peel, whilst on a visit to Drayton Manor in September, 1845, to attack the Anti-Corn-Law League in the *Quarterly Review*, and, angry at what he deemed his betrayal, he somewhat peremptorily demanded explanations from the Duke. His Grace simply wrote to him saying that he felt it his duty to stand by the Queen. This, in his view, implied that he must support the Minister who alone seemed able to carry on her Majesty's Government, which he (Wellington), as "a retained servant of the Crown," could not bring himself to hand over to "the League and the Radicals." † Croker, however, retorted, in a letter to Sir Henry Hardwicke, that Peel had done something quite as bad as that: "he has," wrote the indignant reviewer, "broken up the old interests, divided the great families, and commenced just such a revolution as the Noailles and Montmorencies did in 1789." But the Iron Duke was proof against all such appeals. He entrenched himself behind his favourite doctrine that he was primarily a servant of her Majesty. Her interests, he told the House of Lords, were of more importance than the opinion of any individual about the Corn Law or any other law. At the same time, he did not pretend to relish the situation. As he said—with a

* *Examiner*, 27th December, 1845.

† The Croker Papers. The Correspondence and Diaries of the late Right Honourable John Wilson Croker, LL.D., F.R.S., Secretary to the Admiralty from 1809 to 1830. Edited by Louis J. Jennings. Vol. III., p. 67.

rough soldier's oath—to Lord Beaumont, “it is a — mess, but I must look to the peace of the country and the Queen.”* In private he told Lord Stanley that he was against the policy which Peel had adopted. In public, however, referring to Peel's conversion, he said, in the House of Lords:—“I applauded the conduct of my right hon. friend. I was delighted with it. It was exactly the course I should have followed under similar circumstances, and I therefore determined to stand by him.” The Duke's strong personal loyalty to his young Queen had, in fact, first transformed him into a Conservative Opportunist, and then his own common sense led him to recognise the necessity for abandoning laws that made bread dear to an enfranchised but starving populace.

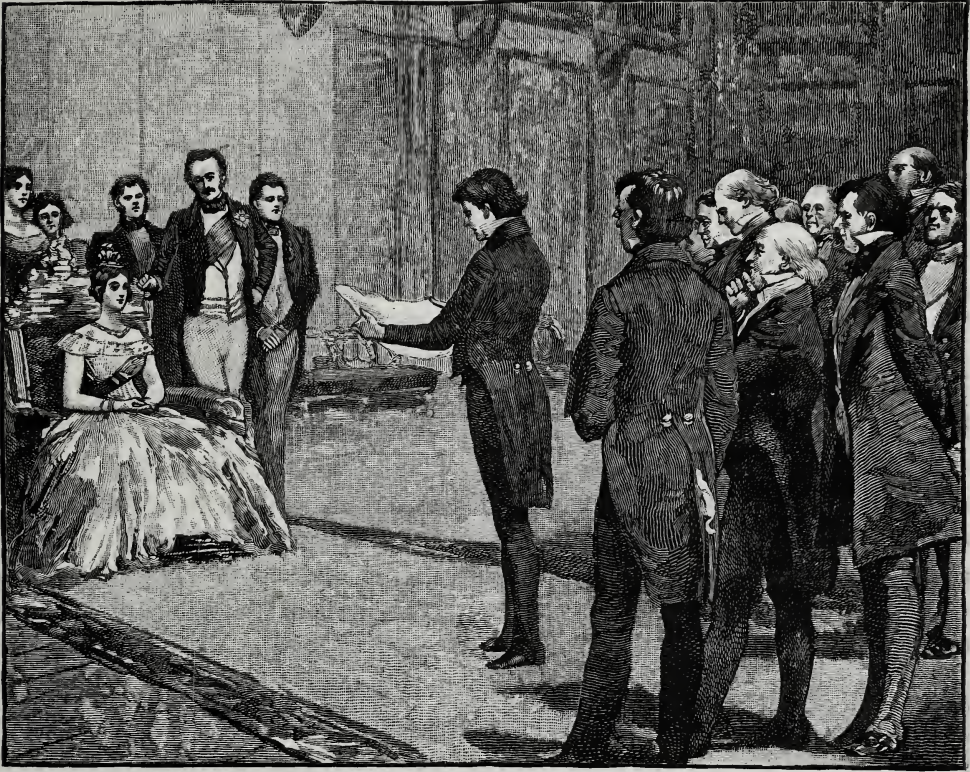
From the sketch now given of the ferment of public opinion, produced by a war between two powerful classes for political predominance in 1846, one thing must be self-evident. In view of the authority and influence of the Duke of Wellington in the House of Lords, it was fortunate for Sir Robert Peel that the quick and generous sympathies of the Queen, whose tender heart was touched by the sufferings of the poor, were entirely with him all through this trying time. Her Majesty may therefore claim some share in the great work that crowned her Minister's career with honour—for she strengthened his hands by the confidence she displayed in his judgment, when his oldest friends forsook him. The Queen knew well that it was with no light heart, and for no trivial cause, that Peel abandoned, not the creed—for, like Mr. Huskisson, he had always been a Free Trader in principle†—but the policy of levying exceptional duties on foreign corn. Much blame has been cast on Sir Robert Peel for giving up that policy almost immediately after he had won place and power by pledging himself to maintain it. Certainly, after the revelations made in the Croker Papers, it is difficult in some respects to justify his conduct. It is indeed regrettable that those to whom his memory ought to be precious, have not deemed it expedient to explain away the instructions which he gave Mr. Croker, as editor of the *Quarterly*, in September, 1845. M. Guizot‡ has, however, defended Peel from the charges of base tergiversation which, to the annoyance of the Queen, were pressed against him in the fierce and fiery invectives of Mr. Disraeli, and in the passionate but somewhat incoherent harangues of Lord George Bentinck. As the French statesman was on terms of intimacy not only with Peel, but with many of his colleagues, his opinion must be received with respect. According to M. Guizot, all through 1845 Sir Robert Peel was in a condition of painful and “touching perplexity” as to his duty in view of the spread of destitution. This perplexity, M. Guizot contends, was that not of a sordid placeman, but of “a sincere and conscientious mind carried forward in the direction of its own inclination by a great flood of public

* Memoirs of an Ex-Minister, by the Earl of Malmesbury, G.C.B., Vol. I., pp. 166 and 167.

† A Sketch of the Life and Character of Sir Robert Peel, by Sir Lawrence Peel, p. 283.

‡ Memoirs of Sir Robert Peel, by M. Guizot, p. 251.

opinion and passion, and struggling painfully against its adversaries, its friends, and itself." When the Queen met Sir Robert Peel with a smile on the 20th of December, and said "she was glad to be able to ask him to withdraw his resignation," she was, according to this theory, really lifting a cloud of gloom from his anxious head, and congratulating him on the ending of that state of suspense in which his troubled mind had been painfully poised. It may be a



THE DEPUTATION FROM LONDON AND DUBLIN CORPORATIONS BEFORE THE QUEEN. (*See p. 216.*)

coincidence, but in corroboration of M. Guizot's view we must note that a sigh of relief echoes through the letter in which the careworn Minister, six days after he resumed office, informed the Princess Lieven of the fact. "However unexpected is the turn which affairs have taken, it is," he writes, "for the best. I resume power with greater means of rendering public service than I should have had if I had relinquished it. But it is a strange dream!"*

Yet, if one considers for a moment the great process of political evolution over which the Queen was from her girlhood called on to preside, one finds nothing really miraculous in the dream. It was merely a phase of the beatific vision of a partially enfranchised democracy, which for the moment

* *Memoirs of Sir Robert Peel*, edited by Philip Henry, Earl Stanhope, and the Right Hon. Edward Cardwell, Vol. II.

dazed all sorts and conditions of men. The late Lord Dalling, who lived through this stirring epoch of bloodless revolution, says that "previous to the Reform Bill and the Municipality Bills, everybody in England *looked up*: the ambitious young man looked up to the great nobleman for a seat in Parliament; the ambitious townsman to the chief men in his borough for a place in the Corporation. Subsequently to these measures, men desirous to elevate their position *looked down*. The aristocratic tendency of other days had thus become almost suddenly a democratic one. This democratic tendency, which has gone on increasing, had made itself already visible at the period when the Corn Law agitation began. It had been natural until then to consider this subject relative to the interests of the upper classes; it was now becoming natural to consider it in relation to the interests of the lower classes. The question presented itself in a perfectly different point of view, and politicians found, somewhat to their surprise, that all former arguments had lost their force. It was this change in the spirit of the times which had occasioned within such a very few years a total change in the manner of looking at matters affected by the Legislature."* Lord Beaconsfield's apologists sometimes say that what embittered him against the capitalists of the Anti-Corn-Law League, was his conviction that though they had the cry of cheap bread on their lips, the whisper of low wages was at their hearts. The wage-rate, no doubt, had a potent influence in recasting public opinion at this time. But it did not recast it in the Disraelitish mould. The working classes discovered, through the lucid teaching of Cobden, that wages did not fall because the Corn duty was low, and that they did not rise because it was high. When they made that discovery, the only argument that could protect Protection in a reformed Parliament vanished from the minds of men who were not partisans of the patrician order. Politicians of calm and enlightened judgment felt, as they felt the air they breathed, that public opinion in 1845-46 was becoming more and more hostile to the Corn Laws. The Queen and the *entourage* of the Court, then greatly under the influence of Baron Stockmar, who was in constant communication with Prince Albert, were evidently among the first to become sensitive to the change, but like Peel, Wellington, and Russell, they frankly acknowledged what must follow from it.

England was in truth all through 1845 moving fast to that "total and immediate repeal" of the Corn Laws which Cobden demanded, and the county gentry, Whig as well as Tory, equally dreaded. When Russell and Peel were in fact waiting for what Prince Bismarck calls "the psychological moment" to proclaim the new departure, the "psychological moment" came with the terrible incident which caused the spectre of famine to stalk over Ireland. That incident was the failure of the potato crop, and it removed the question of the Corn Laws far away from the battle-ground of rival political or

* Sir Robert Peel: An Historical Sketch, by Henry, Lord Dalling, 1874.

economic theories. The problem was no longer one of maintaining or abandoning a territorial system. At the beginning of 1846 it became a question of deciding whether so many hundred thousand of our fellow-creatures in Ireland should perish in the agonies of hunger, or whether, by removing the Corn duty, her Majesty's Government at one blow would strike down the barrier that prevented bread from reaching the lips of a starving peasantry. For the wretched cotters in Ireland the winter of 1845-46 was, truly, one of extreme privation. "Those who had savings," writes Mr. Greg,* "lived off them, but among the really poor there was widespread destitution." Forced to sell their clothes for food, the Irish peasantry refused to pay rent, and when rent was extorted by harsh process of law, retaliatory outrages immediately followed. The ghastly outlook in Ireland gave the Anti-Corn-Law agitators welcome leverage for their movement in England, and they increased their activity every day. Lord John Russell, on the 22nd of November, 1845, wrote the Edinburgh Letter to the electors of the City of London, warning them that the Whig Party, in view of the state of the country, were ready to put an end to a system which had been proved to be the blight of commerce and the bane of agriculture. This, we have seen, forced Peel's hands. As Mr. Bright said to Lord John, whom he met, after the issue of his manifesto, on the platform of a railway station in Yorkshire, "Your letter has made total and immediate repeal inevitable; nothing can save it" (the Corn Law).† Peel himself did not conceal from the Queen that he could perhaps keep the Whigs at bay for three years, and shortly before his death he told Cobden the same thing. But neither the monarch nor her Minister dared to procrastinate in the face of popular destitution, and they felt compelled to obey, no matter at what cost or sacrifice, the dictates of reason and humanity. For it was not from Ireland only that the moan of a suffering people broke upon the ear of a sorrowing Queen. It is true that the venal and factious press of that country at first attempted to deceive the world by denying the existence of wide-spreading potato-rot in the island. With the cries of the dying ringing in their ears, Irish journalists disputed with each other as to whether there actually was any famine in the land. But the facts could not long be concealed, either from the people or from the Queen. At the end of September, 1845, it had to be generally admitted that the staple food of Ireland had suddenly disappeared, and that even in England only the northern counties had escaped from the potato-disease. To such an extent did the rest of England suffer, that Professor Lindley declared there was hardly a sound potato to be found in Covent Garden Market.‡ As Lord Beaconsfield has observed, "This mysterious but universal sickness of a single root changed the history of the world."§

* Irish History for English Readers, p. 133.

† Morley's Life of Cobden, Chap. XIV.

‡ *Gardener's Chronicle*, September, 1845.

§ Endymion, Vol II., p. 190 (Tauchnitz Edition).

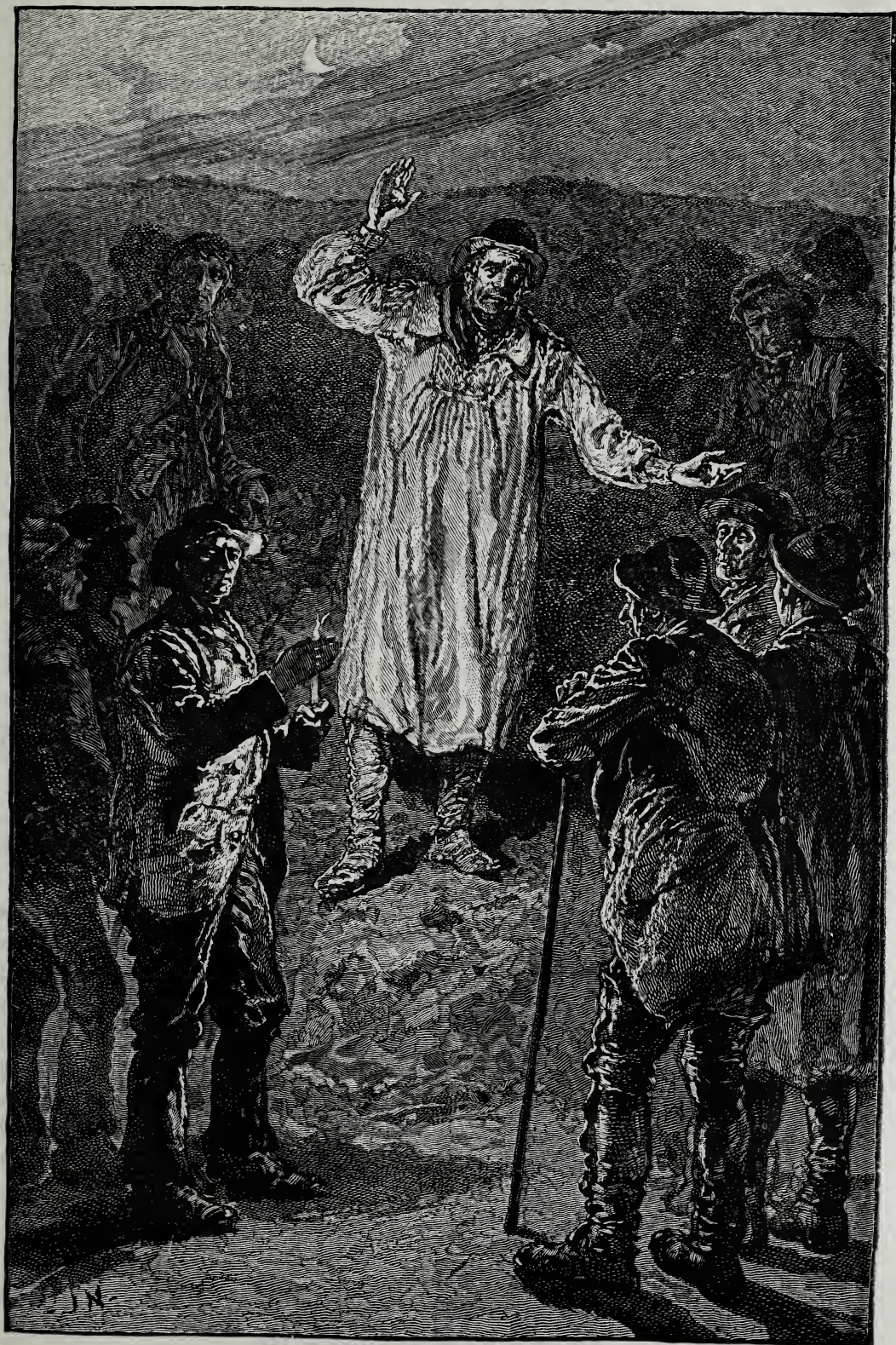
The Corporations of London and Dublin, on the 3rd of January, 1846, memorialised the Queen on the subject. Their deputations, who waited on her at Windsor, received from her a gracious and sympathetic reply to their statements, which she heard with manifest interest. The Anti-Corn-Law League felt that it would be good policy to turn the prevailing distress to account, and it immediately renewed, with redoubled vigour, its agitation against the duties that kept up the price of bread. Its leaders organised a series of meetings all over England and Scotland, and although the Chartists rather held aloof from them, the Free Trade speakers at last fairly touched the heart of the nation. Extraordinary scenes of enthusiasm took place at these meetings. In the last week of 1845, at a meeting in Manchester, it was suggested to raise a quarter of a million pounds sterling to help the agitation that must strengthen Peel's hands,* and Mr. John Morley has described how men jumped up from their seats and cried out, one after the other, "A thousand pounds for me!" "A thousand pounds for us!" and so on, till in less than two hours £60,000 were subscribed on the spot.† Of course, all this fervour provoked a movement on the other side. The Protectionists organised a counter agitation, but it was very badly managed. The speakers selected were persons of high rank and ample fortune. But they lacked sympathy and sense, and this defect was fatal to their cause. Their favourite argument was that there was no famine at all to fear, and they revelled in demonstrating to people who had nothing to eat, that their continued prosperity depended on the maintenance of a Corn Law which made bread dear. The Duke of Norfolk covered the Protectionist agitation with odium and ridicule, by suggesting that if haply here and there a labouring man felt hungry, he might derive great benefit by taking at night, just before bed-time, a pinch of curry-powder as a comforting stomachic. The satirists of the Radical party made affluent use of this egregious imbecility, and the *Examiner*‡ promptly printed a poem headed "Comfort and Curry," in which the Duke and Duchess were cruelly quizzed.

What contributed most to strengthen Sir Robert Peel was the agitation among the agricultural labourers. It was very difficult to resist such an appeal as theirs, when they pointed to their gaunt forms, and wan and haggard faces, and said, "Behold this is the result of the Protection that is kept up for our benefit." They held meetings, in the beginning of 1846, in various parts of the country, and from the speeches at these we get a vivid idea of the sad condition of the English people at this time. One gathering may be cited as typical. It was held by some two hundred starvelings, who met in fear—for the gentry frowned upon the movement—on a bleak winter's night, by the light of a clouded moon and a few flaring candles at a cross-road near Wootton Bassett. The chairman said he had six shillings a week, on which he

* Prentice's History of the League, Vol. II., p. 415.

† Morley's Life of Cobden, Chap. XIV.

‡ *Examiner*, 17th January, 1846.



MEETING OF AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS AT WOOTTON BASSETT. (See p. 216.)

had to keep his wife and two children, and he complained that it was not half enough for them to live on. Another speaker, one William Burchall, said, "that though their wages had risen within the last few months a shilling a week, bread had risen two shillings, so that the difference was against them. He was past forty years of age, and he could say that he had never purchased a pound of good slaughtered beef fit to be carried into the market. As to mutton, he had purchased a little of that, but never as much as would average a pound a year in forty years. He knew what veal was, but never had any at all." Another man said that, during thirty-nine weeks, ending 10th of June, 1844, he had earned only £5 19s. 8d., or 3s. 1d. a week; and that but for getting a little land to rent from Lord Carnarvon, he and his wife and eight children would have starved. His house rent came to £4 a year, and his bread bill alone came to from 7s. 7d. to 8s. 8d. a week. Another man said that he had so little bread to eat that he got weak, and was then discharged as unfit for service. James Pegler complained he had been "hunted down" under the Poor Laws, having been, with his wife and family, forced into the work-house, and separated from them for eleven months. At last, he was turned away to get work, and because he went out of the district to find it, he was taken before the magistrate, charged with desertion, and sent to prison for a month. "God bless my heart and life," exclaimed this poor creature, "I never see'd such a go, to be sure, as how I was served. I know enough of starvation and misery to make me say 'God send us Free Trade.'" At this meeting the labourers declared they were thankful that Providence had put it out of the power of Government "to write taxation on the bosom of the streams and rivulets that were so bountifully spread around their neighbourhood."* They were unconsciously illustrating the wisdom of Paul Louis Courier, who once said that the rich are grateful to Providence for what it gives—the poor, for what it leaves them.

The Queen, it has been reported, was deeply affected by these demonstrations of suffering. It is said that she will never forget, as long as she lives, that she began her reign when the wealth and power of England were waning. She was, on her accession to the throne, the object of the most chivalrous devotion that any Queen could inspire. Yet, when crowned, the tears fell from her eyes, as she thought of her own responsibility in the midst of a nation sinking deeper and deeper into destitution, and plunging deeper and deeper into debt. Mrs. Browning, when she read the account of her Majesty's coronation, gave apt expression to the popular hopes that were raised by the significance which the people instinctively attached to this incident of the ceremony.

"God save thee, weeping Queen!
Thou shalt be well beloved;
The tyrant's sceptre cannot move
As those pure tears have moved!

* See *Times* Report, 7th of January, 1846.

The nature in thy eyes we see
 Which tyrants cannot own ;
 The love that guardeth liberties,
 Strange blessing on the nation lies,
 Whose Sovereign wept ;
 Yea, wept to wear a crown."

As if in fulfilment of the hopes which the Queen's conduct and bearing since her accession had inspired, a happier day was now dawning. There was every prospect that content would now gladden the reign that began in sorrow and in tears. The partial relaxation of the Protective tariff during the last three years had brought hope to the heart of the Sovereign, for it was certainly followed by some amelioration in the lot of her subjects. Her Majesty was profoundly impressed by Sir Robert Peel's inferences from the success of this experimental loosening of the shackles on commerce. She was, therefore, naturally inclined to give the weight of her artless sympathies and "sweet counsel" to a new departure in fiscal policy, that promised to "make Plenty smile on the cheek of Toil." The opening of the Parliamentary Session of 1846 was, therefore, to the Queen no mere formal or ordinary ceremony of State. It was, in her opinion, and in the opinion of the Prince Consort, the initiation of a "bloodless revolution," and the closing of a distinct epoch in the history of Party Government.



DOG'S HEAD.

(Drawn and Etched by the Prince Consort.)

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FREE TRADE PARLIAMENT.

Opening of Parliament in 1846—The Queen's Speech—The Debate on the Address—Sir Robert Peel's Statement—Mr. Disraeli's Philippics—Bishop Wilberforce on Peel's Reception by the House of Commons—Peel's Mistake—Lord George Bentinck's Attack on the Prince Consort—The Queen's Explanations—The Court and the Peelites—The Corn Bill in the House of Lords—Lord Stanley's Political Dinner-Party—The Duke of Wellington and the Peers—Triumph in the Lords and Defeat in the Commons—Peel's Coercion Bill for Ireland—A Fictitious Opposition—Fall of the Government—Lord Aberdeen's adroit Diplomacy—The Oregon Controversy and its Settlement—The Government's Policy in India—War in the Punjab—Victories over the Sikhs—Resignation of the Ministry—The Queen's Farewell to Peel—Her Suggestion of a Coalition—Wellington and Cobden advise Peel to dissolve—Reasons for his Refusal—The Queen and the Duke of Wellington—The Duke's Letter to Lord John Russell—Lyndhurst and Reconstruction—Disintegration of the Tory Party—The Peelites in Opposition—A Hint from Aristophanes—Tory Persecution of Peel.

It was on the 19th of January, 1846,* that the Queen opened in person the Parliament which revolutionised the commercial policy of England, and transferred the political centre of gravity from the territorial to the commercial aristocracy of the country. The Royal procession was formed at Buckingham Palace in the usual order. Her Majesty and Prince Albert descended the grand staircase shortly before two o'clock, the Queen wearing a lustrous diamond circlet on her fair white brow. The Prince was habited in a Field-Marshal's uniform, and the orders of the Garter and Golden Fleece shone on his breast. The State coach with its eight cream-coloured horses then drove with the Royal party to the Palace of the Legislature, and as her Majesty passed through the densely crowded Royal Gallery it was seen that she was labouring under deep but suppressed emotion.

From the Throne she read, in clear but thrilling tones, the following speech:—

"My Lords and Gentlemen,—

"It gives me great satisfaction again to meet you in Parliament, and to have the opportunity of recurring to your assistance and advice.

"I continue to receive from my allies, and from other foreign Powers, the strongest assurances of the desire to cultivate the most friendly relations with this country.

"I rejoice that, in concert with the Emperor of Russia, and through the success of our joint mediation, I have been enabled to adjust the differences which have long prevailed between the Ottoman Porte and the King of Persia, and had seriously endangered the tranquillity of the East.

"For several years a desolating and sanguinary warfare has afflicted the States of the Rio de la Plata. The commerce of all nations has been interrupted, and acts of barbarity have been committed unknown to the practice of a civilised people. In conjunction with the King of the French I am endeavouring to effect the pacification of these States.

"The Convention concluded with France in the course of last year, for the more effectual suppression of the Slave Trade, is about to be carried into immediate execution by the active co-operation of the two Powers on the coast of Africa. It is my desire that our present union, and the good understanding which so happily exists between us, may always be employed to promote the interests of humanity, and to secure the peace of the world.

* Hansard.



THE QUEEN OPENING PARLIAMENT IN 1846.



OPENING OF PARLIAMENT IN 1346: ARRIVAL OF THE ROYAL PROCESSION AT
THE HOUSE OF LORDS. (See p. 220.)

"I regret that the conflicting claims of Great Britain and the United States, in respect of the territory on the north-western coast of America, although they have been made the subject of repeated negotiation, still remain unsettled. You may be assured that no effort, consistent with national honour, shall be wanting on my part to bring this question to an early and peaceful termination.

"Gentlemen of the House of Commons,—

"The estimates for the year will be laid before you at an early period. Although I am deeply sensible of the importance of enforcing economy in all branches of the expenditure, yet I have been compelled, by a due regard to the exigencies of the Public Service, and to the state of our Naval and Military establishments, to propose some increase in the estimates which provide for their efficiency.

"My Lords and Gentlemen,—

"I have observed with great regret the frequent instances in which the crime of deliberate assassination has been of late committed in Ireland. It will be for you only to consider whether any measures can be devised calculated to give increased protection to life, and to bring to justice the perpetrators of so dreadful a crime.

"I have to lament that in consequence of a failure of the potato crop in many parts of the United Kingdom there will be a deficient supply of an article of food which forms the chief subsistence of great numbers of my people. The disease by which the plant has been affected has prevailed to the utmost extent in Ireland. I have adopted all such precautions as it was in my power for the purpose of alleviating the sufferings which may be caused by this calamity; and I shall confidently rely on your co-operation in devising such other means for effecting the same benevolent purpose as may require the sanction of the Legislature.

"I have had great satisfaction in giving my assent to the measures which you have presented to me from time to time, calculated to extend commerce, and to stimulate domestic skill and industry, by the repeal of prohibitory and the relaxation of protective duties. The prosperous state of the revenue, the increased demand for labour, and the general improvement which has taken place in the internal conditions of the country are strong testimonies in favour of the course you have pursued.

"I recommend you to take into your early consideration, whether the principles on which you have acted may not with advantage be more extensively applied, and whether it may not be in your power, after a careful review of the existing duties on many articles, the produce of manufacture of other countries, to make such further reductions and remissions as may tend to ensure the continuance of the great benefits to which I have adverted, and, by enlarging our commercial intercourse, to strengthen the bonds of amity with Foreign Powers.

"Any measures which you may adopt for effecting these great objects will, I am convinced, be accompanied by such precautions as shall prevent permanent loss to the revenue, or injurious results to any of the great interests of the country.

"I have full reliance on your just and dispassionate consideration of matters so deeply affecting the public welfare.

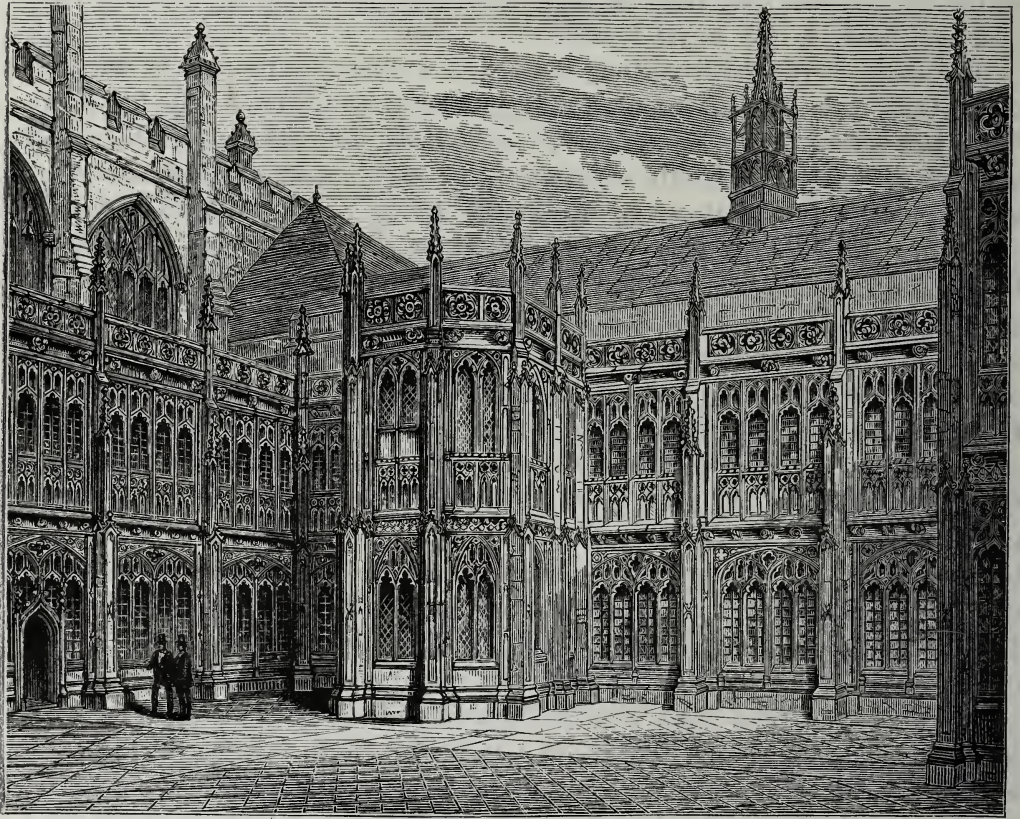
"It is my earnest prayer that, with the blessing of Divine Providence on your councils, you may be enabled to promote friendly feelings between different classes of my subjects, to provide additional security for the continuance of peace, and to maintain contentment and happiness at home, by increasing the comfort and bettering the condition of the great body of my people."

When the Queen retired, then the difficulty of some of our Constitutional forms became apparent. It was remarked at the time that, had her Majesty suddenly come down in the middle of the Session, and, usurping the functions of Ministers, laid a startling project of legislation before Parliament, she could not have found herself more thoroughly the mover of a controversial Bill than, in spite of herself, she had become that afternoon. Every caution had been exercised, it will be observed, in keeping all mention of the Corn duties out of the Royal Speech. Yet, within a few hours after it

was read, the two Houses were engaged in an acrimonious debate, not on the guarded generalities of the Address from the Throne, but on the proposal for the total and immediate Repeal of the Corn Laws. The Queen's Speech, looked at apart from the events of the day, might seem to recommend something less than that. But it was that, and nothing less, which was in men's minds and hearts, and for once in our Parliamentary history the Debate on the Address was not a barren criticism of the general policy of the Government, but really a sharp discussion on a special measure foreshadowed dimly in the Royal Speech.

The story of the Parliamentary Session of 1846, in its bearing on the fate of the Corn Law Bill, has been so ably told both by Dr. Cooke Taylor, in his "Life and Times of Sir Robert Peel," and by Mr. John Morley, in his "Life of Cobden," that it is hardly necessary here to do more than glance at its salient points. In the House of Lords the debate on the Address was brief and bitter—at least as bitter as the Duke of Richmond, who assailed Sir Robert Peel, could make it. But in the House of Commons the proceedings were more exciting. Lord Francis Egerton (afterwards Earl of Ellesmere) moved, and Mr. Beckett Denison, who had driven Lord Morpeth out of his seat for the West Riding, because his Lordship had joined the Anti-Corn-Law League, seconded the Address. Sir Robert Peel followed, and vindicated his change of policy, resting the chief strength of his case on his own observations, first, of the effect of the gradual relaxation of Protective duties which he had tried, and secondly, on the failure of the potato crop—a report on which had been drawn up for him by Professor Lindley and Dr. Lyon Playfair. It was in this speech that he intimated he was at first prepared to suspend the Corn Law by an Order in Council, but that his colleagues objected to that course on the ground that, if once opened to foreign corn, the ports could never again be closed. Lord John Russell followed, and explained how he had failed to form a Ministry; and then Lord George Bentinck, waiving his right as leader of the Protectionists to reply, put up Mr. Disraeli to deliver one of the first of those violent philippics against Peel which gave him a unique reputation as a Parliamentary *sabreur*. What could the House think of a statesman, he asked, who having, as he had boasted, served four sovereigns, was finally compelled, by the observations of the last three years, to change his opinion on a subject which had been discussed in his hearing from every conceivable point of view during a quarter of a century? He likened him to the Capitan Pasha of the Sultan, who, on the plea that he hated a war, ended it by going over to the enemy, and betraying his Imperial master. Peel's speech, said Mr. Disraeli, was "a glorious example of egotistical rhetoric." He was "no more a great statesman than a man who got up behind a carriage was a great whip. Both were anxious for progress, and both wanted a good place." It was a brilliant, dazzling, witty harangue, and it caught the humour, not of the betrayed Protectionists merely, but to some extent of the House also.

Looking back on Peel's speech now, one can detect a false note in it. Dr. Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, who went to hear the debate, in a letter to Miss Noel, says that the Prime Minister's statement was received with "a kind of thundering sullenness." * He unconsciously irritated the House by his assumption that the case for the Corn Laws must needs fall after he had personally put the matter to the test of a three years'



ST. STEPHEN'S CLOISTERS, WESTMINSTER HALL.

experiment. It lessened the grace of his submission to events and facts, when he argued as if the observations and experiments and researches of all the greatest economists in the world during a score of years were not in any sense conclusive till verified by Sir Robert Peel. And all through the debates, it is quite clear that he contrived to embitter his opponents by seeming to talk down to them. His tone was that of one who thought they were rather to be pitied than blamed, because they could not understand that if three years had sufficed to change the opinion of their leader, three minutes ought to suffice for the conversion of his followers.

* Life and Letters of Samuel Wilberforce, D.D., by R. G. Wilberforce, Vol. I.

One crisis and one set of circumstances hardly convinced men, whose class interests were at stake, that Protection was wrong, especially after Sir Robert



LORD STANLEY (AFTERWARDS FOURTEENTH EARL OF DERBY).

Peel himself had taught them to disregard the experience of a quarter of a century. Peel, when he showed how keenly he felt Mr. Disraeli's sarcasms, failed to remember that the arrows which stung him came from his own quiver.

A few days after the Session opened, Sir Robert Peel, in explaining his plan for getting rid of the Corn duties, made it clear that Repeal was to be

total, but not immediate. Writing to Mrs. Cobden on the 28th of January, Cobden says:—"Peel is at last delivered, but I hardly know whether to call it a boy or a girl. Something between the two, I believe. His Corn measure makes an end of all Corn laws in 1849, and in the meantime it is virtually a fixed duty of 4s. He has done more than was expected of him, and all but the right thing." As a matter of fact, there was to be a sliding scale till 1849, the maximum duty being 10s. when wheat was under 48s. a quarter, and the minimum duty being 4s. when wheat was 54s. a quarter. On the 2nd of March, when the House went into Committee on the resolution, Mr. Villiers' amendment, insisting on immediate, as well as total, Repeal, was lost by a large majority, and on the 11th of May the Corn Bill reached the third reading. The debate lasted three nights, and at 4 a.m. on the 16th it was passed by a majority of 98 in a House of 516.

Before tracing the subsequent stages of this controversy, it may not be amiss to allude to one of the most curious incidents that marked its progress. On the 27th of January, when Sir Robert Peel's resolutions embodying his financial policy came before the House of Commons, the presence of Prince Albert in the gallery, as a spectator of the scene, roused the jealousy and wrath of the Tories. Lord George Bentinck, in the course of the debate, waved his hand excitedly towards his Royal Highness, and accused him of being "seduced by the First Minister of the Crown to come down to this House to usher in, to give *éclat*, and, as it were, by reflection from the Queen, to give the semblance of a personal sanction of her Majesty to a measure which, be it for good or evil, a great majority at least of the landed aristocracy of England, of Scotland, and of Ireland, imagine fraught with deep injury, if not ruin, to them." This was an insinuation at once ridiculous and unjust. The truth is that the Queen, from her girlhood, has had a somewhat exaggerated idea of the instructive value of Parliamentary debates. She is to this day an ardent student of all Parliamentary reports. She has the true Parliamentary instinct peculiar to England and English-speaking communities which leads them to take a strange but genuine delight in Parliamentary discussion. Indeed, she has been known to tell her Ministers not only what she thought of a particular debate, but how she herself would have handled the subject-matter of it had she been a member of the House of Commons; in fact, it was in replying to a communication of this kind that Lord Palmerston once observed, in the felicitous vein of a courtier, that it was a lucky thing for Ministers who had the misfortune to differ from her Majesty, that they had not to answer her arguments in Parliament. Under the influence of these ideas, the Queen naturally induced Prince Albert to attend the great historic debate of the 14th of January—"to hear a fine debate," as she herself has said, "being so useful to all princes."* Party feeling, however, ran so high in

* Martin's Life of the Prince Consort, Note by the Queen, Vol. I., p. 322.

1846, that Lord George Bentinck and the Tory Protectionists put the worst construction on a perfectly innocent act. The Prince Consort simply went to listen to the discussion, just as the Prince of Wales and his son went to hear Mr. Gladstone introduce his Government of Ireland Bill in the House of Commons on the 8th of April, 1886; and it is a mark of the sweetened temper of political life in these latter days that not only did no Tory complain of the Prince's presence on that occasion, but nobody even resented the kid-glove plaudits with which the young Prince Albert Victor, with the generous but irrepressible enthusiasm of youth, greeted Mr. Gladstone's stately and impressive peroration.* Lord George Bentinck's attack on the Prince Consort was deficient alike in tact and taste; but it is only fair to say that there was the shadow of an excuse for it. It had been whispered that the Court had become Peelite—and the rumour was not without foundation in fact. The Prince Consort reflected its sympathies quite accurately when he wrote to Baron Stockmar, on the 16th of February, that Peel was "abused like the most disgraceful criminal," adding not only that factions would combine to crush him—as they did—but that this "would be a great misfortune."

In the House of Lords the course of the Corn Bill was comparatively smooth. Lord Stanley took the leadership of the Protectionists, but the disintegration of parties was complete. Nothing illustrates this better than a caustic remark which Lord Stanley threw out at a great political dinner-party at his house, two days after the Bill had been passed by the Commons. On that occasion he said, scoffingly, that it was most diverting to see a Liberal like Lord Bessborough whipping up the Bishops to support the Duke of Wellington on a Free Trade question.† In the Upper House the opposition to the Bill virtually collapsed. Lord Stanley, when argumentative, was tame, and, when personal, vituperative. The ablest of the Bishops, in the name of the Church, repudiated the idea that the Protectionist policy had benefited the rural poor; and Wilberforce distinguished himself, especially, by his graphic picture of the sufferings which the agricultural labourers were enduring. The Duke of Wellington, however, decided the matter by telling the Peers that they would be wise to bow to public opinion with a good grace, and not commit themselves to a struggle between the Crown and the people. But he was hardly candid in pretending that the Crown in this matter was opposed to the people. This idea can be disproved by an extract from that remarkable letter in which the Queen, in speaking of Peel's resumption of office, eulogises his chivalrous behaviour towards herself, and adds, with unaffected sincerity, "I have never seen him so excited and determined, and such a good cause *must* succeed."‡ The Lords, however, acting on the Duke's advice, only engaged in a sham fight, and the final stage of the

* Leading article, *Daily Chronicle*, 9th April, 1886.

† *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, by the Right Hon. the Earl of Malmesbury, Vol. I., p. 171.

‡ *Martin's Life of the Prince Consort*, Vol. II., p. 312.

Bill passed without debate or division. The night on which Peel's triumph in the Lords was announced was the night on which, however, his Ministry fell in the Commons. It was the night on which a combination of factions, as the Prince Consort had predicted, rejected what was called the Coercion Bill for Ireland, and wrecked the most popular Cabinet that ever governed England.

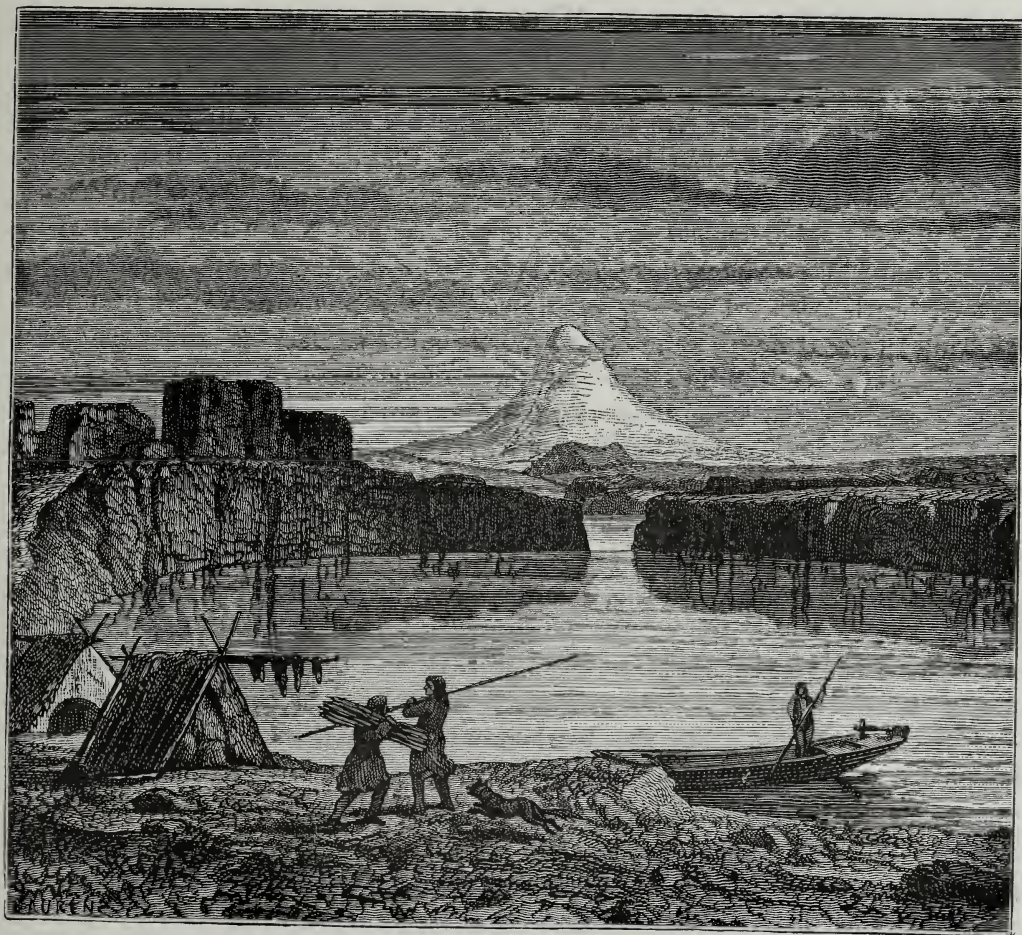
It has already been said that the unruly state of Ireland had been



SIR JAMES GRAHAM.

aggravated by famine, and that evictions, following refusal of rent, had been avenged by outrages. In the Queen's Speech it had been indicated that measures to restore order in Ireland would be framed; but it was not till the end of June that a Coercion Bill was brought forward in the House of Commons for second reading. This was the Bill which was fatal to the Ministry. According to an old legend of the Moslems, a good angel and a bad angel walk on either side of a man all through life, and Lord Dalling has very justly observed that, whilst Free Trade was the good angel of Peel's Administration, its bad angel was Coercion for Ireland. The introduction of a Coercion Bill for Ireland, after the safety of the Corn

Law Bill was assured, was taken as a plausible pretext for dissolving the alliance between the Whigs and the Government. It was regarded by the Protectionists as an excellent opportunity for punishing the Ministers for deserting them. Perhaps, if the truth were known, it was regarded by Sir Robert Peel himself as a good field in which to meet a defeat that was



VIEW IN OREGON: THE COLUMBIA RIVER AND MOUNT HOOD.

inevitable, and which would send him into the retirement for which latterly he had begun to crave. A great deal has been said and written as to the reasons which induced the various parties to form combinations against the Administration that had done the State such noble service. The motives of its enemies, however, were simple enough. The Protectionists had what they called their "betrayal" to avenge; the Whigs considered that Peel had behaved most ungenerously to the Melbourne Ministry, whose conciliatory Irish policy, as worked out by Lord Normanby and Mr. Drummond, had promised well for that country. They firmly believed that

if they were in power they could control Ireland by kindness, but that in applying such a policy, they did not dare to trust as a colleague the Minister who had so unscrupulously overthrown Lord Melbourne. A union between Peel and Lord John Russell, such as the Queen desired to bring about, was also impossible for another reason—Peel would not part company with Sir James Graham. Lord John Russell, on the other hand, would not consent to act with Sir James, whom the Whigs detested as an unforgivable renegade. The Coercion Bill for Ireland was therefore doomed from the outset, not on its merits, but by party passion. This was so strong, that the Whigs in the House of Lords, as if to give Peel warning of his fate, actually combined with the Protectionists to defeat Lord Lyndhurst's Charitable Trusts Bill, although it was directed against abuses which every Whig was pledged to attack. "We, alas," Lord Campbell confesses, "with shame," had "not enough virtue to withstand the temptation of snatching a vote against the Government"*—a vote, by the way, which kept alive heinous abuses for eight years longer.

The Upper House, however, was not quite so factious over the Irish Coercion Bill. It was introduced by the Earl of St. Germain, who explained that it enabled the Government not only to proclaim any district in Ireland in which crime prevailed, but to quarter extra police on it at the expense of the ratepayers. Stringent clauses prohibiting the possession of arms, and preventing people from quitting their houses between sunset and sunrise, were added. These were, in fact, the clauses which whetted the wit of the younger Radicals against what they derisively termed, not an Irish Coercion, but an "Irish Curfew Bill." The Lords were also told that outrages in Ireland had risen from 1,496 in 1844, to 3,642 in 1845, and the Bill passed through the Upper House with very trifling opposition. It was in the Commons that it was destined to be made the battle-ground of factions. The Protectionists pretended that Peel was not in earnest in introducing it; for, though the Bill was announced in January, it was not till the 30th of March that Sir James Graham moved the first reading, and not till late in June that the second reading was taken. The Whigs and Radicals objected to the Bill because they held that conciliation, and not repression, was wanted in Ireland. The Irish members taunted Peel with having created the disturbances in Ireland by changing the tolerant policy of Melbourne, Normanby, and Drummond, and by giving Irish judicial appointments to the most violent Orange partisans. Others, like Mr. Roche, asked "Why don't you feed the Irish peasantry, if, as is clear, hunger is making them discontented?" The position of men like Mr. Cobden was most embarrassing. As Liberals, they were bound to vote against the Bill. But then they did not wish to expel Peel from office—and Peel had said that by the Bill he would stand or fall. They decided at last to vote against the measure, and rightly, for it was impossible

* Campbell's Lives of the Chancellors.

to carry on the Queen's Government with three parties in the House—Peelites, Protectionists, and Whig Free Traders. A single vote, moreover, could not save the Ministry, for Peel's enemies would soon have organised another combination against him on another question. The Bill was accordingly defeated by a vote of 219 to 292, and the great Ministry which effected a peaceful revolution, and created a new era of government in England, fell before a majority of 73. Though 106 Protectionists returned to their old allegiance, and voted with Peel, 70 voted against him, and they, combined with all the Whigs and Radicals, rendered the defeat of the Government so complete that even Peel's antagonists forbore to cheer. Writing on the 4th of July to Lord Hardwicke in India, the fallen Minister said he had every reason to forgive his enemies for "having conferred upon him the blessing of the loss of power." *

Just before the fatal verdict was given, the Queen had the consolation of knowing that, thanks to the adroit diplomacy of Lord Aberdeen, who was justly a *persona grata* at Court, a dispute with the United States as to the settlement of the Oregon territory had ended. This was some slight solace to her Majesty for the vexation of losing a Ministry which she felt convinced was in full touch with national sympathies at a most perilous time, and which she trusted, she says in one of her letters, because she never once knew them recommend anything "that was not for the country's good, and never for the Party's advantage only." † This controversy with the United States had in 1822 brought us to the verge of war, for, by a Convention in 1818, American and English settlers were to have the privilege of colonising the no-man's land in Oregon indiscriminately for ten years, a term again renewed in 1827. Quarrels from clashing jurisdictions and conflicting allegiances naturally arose out of this confused state of things, and it was clear that the territory ought to be divided fairly and finally between the two Governments. In March, President Polk had sent a Message to Congress, pointing out that though England was at peace with all the world, she was making unusual warlike preparations "both at home and in her North American possessions." This, the President broadly hinted, was due to the continuance of the Oregon dispute, and, alluding in an alarmist fashion to the contingency of war between the two nations, he suggested the propriety of also increasing the military and naval forces of the Republic. On the 13th of April, Mr. Reverdy Johnson proposed to the Senate a Resolution, which was carried, giving notice to England that the existing loose arrangement with regard to Oregon should, so far as America was concerned, determine at the end of twelve months, and urging on the Governments of both countries the necessity for taking steps to arrive at an amicable settlement. It was on the 9th of June that Lord Brougham asked Lord Aberdeen if it were true that

* Memoirs of Sir Robert Peel, edited by Philip, Earl Stanhope, and the Right Hon. Edward Cardwell.

† Martin's Life of the Prince Consort, Vol. I., p. 328.

the Oregon question had really been settled, and Lord Aberdeen answered in the affirmative. He seems to have managed the whole affair very skilfully. Finding that President Polk would not submit the dispute to arbitration, and that he sent a Message to the Senate recommending it to give notice of ending the joint occupation of Oregon, Lord Aberdeen waited to see what the Senate would do. When it passed Mr. Reverdy Johnson's friendly and suggestive



THE BRITISH ARMY CROSSING THE SUTEJ.

Resolution, Lord Aberdeen, discarding diplomatic forms, immediately acted on it, and submitted a draft of a new Oregon Convention, formulating his idea of an amicable settlement for the consideration of the United States. Mr. Pakenham, the American Secretary of State, promptly accepted it as the basis of the Treaty, which was ratified on 17th of June, 1846—a Treaty which made the 49th parallel of North latitude the boundary line between the two countries. All land to the north of that line went to Canada; and all land to the south of it, to the United States.

Another cause of anxiety had virtually disappeared before Peel resigned office. The war cloud that loomed over our Indian frontier had vanished,



THE BATTLE OF FEROZESHAH.

though not till a brilliant and decisive campaign had been fought against the Sikhs in the Punjab.

The power of the Sikh nation was consolidated by Ranjit Sing—an adventurer who, in 1799, obtained a grant of Lahore from Zaman Shah. He gradually conquered the Punjab, and, in 1809, attacked the small Sikh States east of the Sutlej. Those Cis-Sutlej principalities accordingly sought and obtained British protection. In 1818, Ranjit stormed Multan, and carried the Khalsa banner from the extreme south of the Punjab, far away into the valley of Kashmir. In 1839, his son, Kharak Sing, succeeded to his throne, but was supposed to have been poisoned in 1840. After that, the Sikh dominion fell into anarchy, and frequent violations of British territory led to the first Sikh war of 1845.

On the 17th of November, 1845, the Sikhs declared war on the English, and on the 11th of December the first Sikh soldier crossed the Sutlej. On the 18th, the battle of Moodkee was fought by Sir Hugh Gough, afterwards Lord Gough, who was in command of an army of 11,000 men. Moodkee is a village in the Ferozepore district, lying in a plain twenty-six miles south of the Sutlej. Two days before the battle the Sikhs crossed the river at Ferozepore with 4,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry, and 22 guns. At Moodkee they were driven from their position after a hard struggle, in which Gough had 215 killed and 657 wounded. The battle may be said to have gone on till the 22nd, when our troops stormed and took the entrenched camp of the enemy at Ferozeshah, twelve miles from the left bank of the Sutlej. The Sikhs attributed their defeat at that place not so much to the skill of our generals, as to the treachery of their own leader. They lost 2,000 men, and the British 694 killed and 1,721 wounded ere the earthworks were carried. Sir Robert Sale and General McCaskell were killed. Many of our losses were due to the blowing-up of the enemy's camp after we had entered it; many of our men were killed whilst burying the dead, a misfortune attributed to our lack of a strong enough force of cavalry to clear the ground. Sir Henry Hardinge, the Governor-General, was present at both engagements. He had generously offered to serve in a military capacity under Gough, who put him in command of a Division. It was for this reason that Sir Henry wrote to Gough a despatch describing the battle, which had afterwards to be sent by Gough to Sir Henry himself in his capacity as Viceroy. It is interesting to note that our troops, for six days previous to the battle of Moodkee, had marched a distance of 150 miles, and that on the very day on which they fought that battle, they had made a forced march of thirty miles. Yet, though faint with fatigue, hunger, and thirst, when ordered to attack fresh troops, they went into action without a murmur and with the desperate valour that repulsed the enemy. During the night they bivouacked on the stricken field, and next day entrenched themselves, waiting for the onset of the Sikhs. But unexpectedly they

were reinforced by two regiments, and then they pressed on to help Sir J. Littler, who was manœuvring at Ferozeshah. It was after joining him that they made the night attack on the enemy's camp, which crowned their standards with victory. On the 26th of March, London was greatly excited by the tidings of another great victory, which had been won on the 28th of January. This is known as the victory of Aliwal, the battle having been fought at a village of that name about nine miles west of Loodiana, on the left bank of the Sutlej. It had been held by Ranjur Sing, who had crossed the river in force and menaced Loodiana. On the 28th, Sir Harry Smith—determined to clear the left bank of the stream, *i.e.*, the British bank—attacked the Sikhs in great force, and, after a desperate effort, put them to flight. It was, however, a troopers' battle, being gained by the stubborn valour of the British cavalry, which was hurled in masses, three times, against the Sikhs, each time piercing their lines. The last charge decided the day. The enemy were pushed into the river, where large numbers were drowned, and 67 guns were ultimately taken by the victors. The effect of this battle was immediate. The Khalsa banner vanished, as if by magic, from all the forts on our side of the Sutlej, and the territory east of the river submitted to the Indian Government.

All doubt as to the fortune of war ended on the 10th of February, 1846, when Gough fought the terrible battle of Sobraon. The Sikhs had chosen a strong position on the east side of the Sutlej, protecting the Hariki ford, and their rear rested on the village of Sobraon. It was on the Ferozepore side that the fight took place, the Sikhs holding their earthworks defiantly, till cut down almost to the last man. They lost 5,000 men, and but few lived to recross the Sutlej. This crowning victory, in which our losses were 320 killed and 2,083 wounded, cleared the left bank of the river. After news of the victory of Sobraon came to Lahore, the Ranee and her Durbar sent a chief—the Rajah Golab Sing, who had always been on good terms with the British Government—as an envoy, to sue for peace. The Rajah agreed to concede our demands, which were the surrender in full sovereignty of the territory between the Sutlej and Beas rivers; an indemnity of one and a half crore of rupees; the disbandment of the Sikh army, and its reorganisation on the system adopted by the celebrated Maharajah Ranjit Sing, the limitations on its employment to be determined in communication with the Indian Government; the surrender of all guns which had been pointed against us; and the control of both banks of the Sutlej. It was further agreed that Golab Sing and the young Maharajah Duleep Sing should repair to the camp of the Governor-General of India, which they did on the 18th of February, when his Highness the Maharajah formally made his submission. After this, it was arranged he should return to Lahore with the Governor-General and the conquering army, who occupied the city on the 22nd. In the actual Treaty it was further stipulated that no European or American was to be employed by the Maharajah Duleep Sing without the

consent of the British Government, and that Golab Sing was to be made Maharajah of the territory lying between the Ravee and the Indus, including the valley of Kashmir, paying every year to our Government, in acknowledgment of British supremacy, a horse, twelve shawl goats, and three pairs of shawls. Subsequently, the conquering army marched in triumph to Delhi, escorting



SIR HENRY HARDINGE.

the trophies and spoils of the sixty days' war, and displaying them proudly in every city and military station *en route*, as symbols of British prowess and prestige.

Sir H. Hardinge and Sir H. Gough were thanked in Parliament for their services, and raised to the peerage with munificent pensions. There were some who thought that the State was too lavish in its rewards on this occasion, and the country was reminded that it had done no more for Rodney than it was doing for Gough. Nor was this view altogether indefensible. Good luck rather than good guidance rescued us from a perilous situation in the Punjab, for it is

certain that the Indian Government sent our troops to the field in a condition that would have rendered failure certain, had we been contending with European armies. The Sikhs, it is true, were a small nation, but they were a nation of warriors, and therefore formidable. They put into the field a splendidly



THE RIVAL PAGES. (Reduced Fac-simile after Punch.)

"I'm afraid you're not strong enough for the place, John."

equipped and disciplined army of 100,000 men, who, as soldiers, were "bravest of the brave." This was surely a powerful instrument of warfare, strong enough, in able hands, to change the destinies of an empire, and yet we were quite unprepared to meet such a dangerous enemy. Nothing, in fact, but the personal pluck of our troops at this great crisis saved our Indian dominion on our frontier. The Sikhs, however, it must be also stated, failed where they should have succeeded, because they had no general who was a master of strategy.

They divided their army into two large corps. Each moved against our chief forts, Ferozepore and Loodiana, without intending to attack them, and it happened that the distance between these two forts was greater round by the Sikh side of the Sutlej than by ours. The Sikhs, therefore, had to manœuvre in the circumference of a circle, whilst we at the centre could move along its arc. The two Sikh armies were not mutually supporting. Had they both crossed the Sutlej in such fashion that they could have supported each other, we could hardly have attacked them at Ferozeshah, or fought for twenty-four hours against an army 70,000 strong, in an entrenched position, when another Sikh force, 40,000 strong, was within sound of our guns.

Hardly had the Queen and the country ceased to rejoice over political, diplomatic, and military triumphs, than another painful Ministerial crisis had to be faced. Sovereign and subject were alike touched by the strange and dramatic coincidence of their trusted Minister, at the supreme moment of victory, falling, like Tarpeia, crushed, as if in requital for a great service to the people. On the 26th of June there was a Cabinet meeting to consider the hostile vote on the Irish Coercion Bill, and the Prime Minister went down to Osborne to confer with the Queen. He returned to inform Parliament, on the 29th, that Ministers had tendered their resignations, and only held office till their successors could relieve them of their posts. He also said that he would support Lord John Russell in all his Free Trade measures, and paid an eloquent tribute to Mr. Cobden, to whom he generously gave credit for organising the victory of the Free Traders. When he left the House he was followed home by a cheering crowd.

The resignation of Sir Robert Peel and his colleagues was a mournful incident in the Queen's life. She had learned to respect and trust the Prime Minister and his colleagues, one of whom, Lord Aberdeen, had, by his gentle manners and cultured companionship, won the hearts of the Queen and the Prince Consort. The country, in the opinion of the Queen, was in a critical condition. One of the great political parties was shattered as a governing organisation, and her Majesty and her husband both knew how safe and valuable was the pilotage of those with whom, says Sir Theodore Martin, "they had grown familiar, not merely in the anxious counsels of State, but in the intimacies of friendship."

There can be no doubt that the feeling of the Queen and of the country alike ran in favour of retaining Sir Robert Peel at the head of affairs. After he resigned, and the Whig Administration, headed by Lord John Russell, took his place, the sentiments of the Sovereign were, curiously enough, reproduced unconsciously by Mr. Wakley in the House of Commons. Referring to the change of Government, he said, "I am utterly at a loss to understand why it was that Sir Robert Peel left his place in the Cabinet, and gave up his situation to others who are scarcely prepared to carry out the Liberal principles

which the Right Honourable Baronet professed in the last speech that he delivered to this House. At this moment Sir Robert Peel is the most popular man in the kingdom. He is believed in, he is almost adored by the masses, who believe that no Minister before him ever made such sacrifices as he has made in their behalf." *Punch* had, however, anticipated Mr. Wakley as an exponent of popular feeling when Sir Robert Peel tendered his resignation in December, 1845. The great comic journal then gave its readers a picture, showing Peel and Lord John Russell as rival candidates for the office of page to the Queen, and her Majesty settling the claims of one by saying, "I'm afraid you're not strong enough for the place, John." This was also the feeling even of the Whig gentry, who thought Lord John needlessly bold in forcing on such a disagreeable question as the Repeal of the Corn Laws in his letter to the electors of London. "I hear," wrote Lord Clarendon to Lord Lyndhurst, on the 17th of December, 1845, "Lord John has gone down to Windsor to-night; and I can assure you that the most acceptable news he can bring back to *his whole party* would be that he had not considered himself justified in undertaking the task proposed to him by the Queen." * That the Queen was still desirous of retaining her Ministers in office after they again resigned in June, 1846, is expressly taken for granted in a letter addressed by the Duke of Wellington to Peel on the 21st of June.† It is put beyond all doubt by a letter dated the 7th of July from her Majesty to the King of the Belgians, in which she says:—"Yesterday (6th of July) was a very hard day for me. I had to part from Sir Robert Peel and Lord Aberdeen, who are irreparable losses to us and to the country. They were both so much overcome that it quite upset me, and we have in them two devoted friends. We felt so safe with them." At Court it was thought that Sir Robert should dissolve, or coalesce with the more moderate Whigs. The Duke of Wellington was for dissolution, and, by a curious coincidence, for the same reason which Mr. Cobden seems to have given in a private letter which he wrote to the fallen Minister recommending that step. Peel's public services, and the confidence which the industrial classes had in his policy, would, he thought, induce the country to give him a working majority.‡ On the other hand, Sir Robert Peel thought that to dissolve on a Coercion Bill for Ireland "would shake the foundations of the legislative union," and ensure "a worse return of Irish Members—rendered more desperate, more determined to obstruct, by every artifice, the passing of a Coercion Bill in the new Parliament." In fact, he was at pains to impress on the Queen the tradition which she is understood to have handed down to a later generation of statesmen that, with the exception of "No Popery," the most dangerous of all election cries

* Martin's Life of Lord Lyndhurst, Vol. II., p. 409.

† Memoirs of Sir Robert Peel, edited by Lord Stanhope and the Right Hon. Edward Cardwell. Murray: 1875. Vol. II., p. 298.

‡ Memoirs of Sir Robert Peel, *ut supra*.

is "Coercion for Ireland." * There was another cogent reason which had weight with the Queen. Her Majesty has ever regarded the power to dissolve Parliament as a sacred trust vested in her for the protection of the country, and the Crown, against factious Parliaments. But it is a power like the talisman in

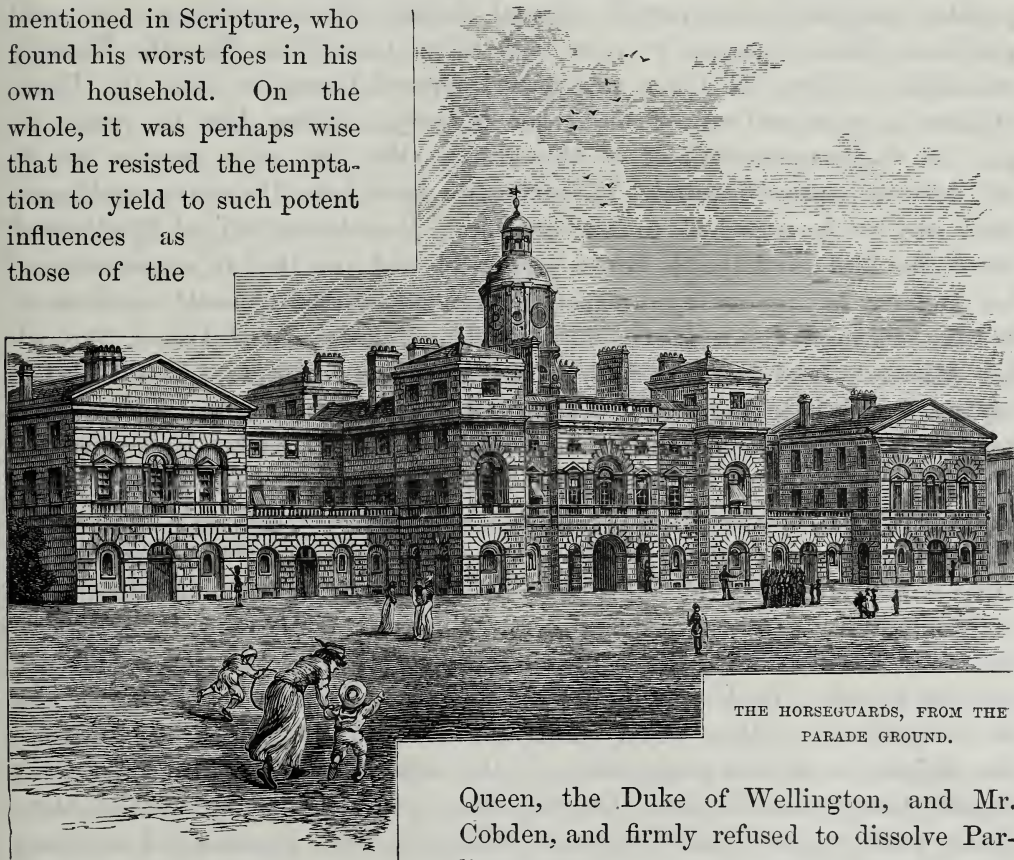


LORD CAMPBELL.

Balzac's story, that loses its virtue by repeated use on trivial occasions. "The hope of getting a stronger minority," said Peel, in his Memorandum to the Duke of Wellington, "is no justification for a Dissolution." And yet, with all his popularity, that was his highest hope. The differences between Lord John Russell and Lord Grey were not acute enough to cause a schism in the

* Sir Robert Peel's Memorandum to the Duke of Wellington on the Position of the Cabinet, June 21. *Memoirs of Sir Robert Peel*, Vol. II., p. 238.

Whig Party. The Free Traders, on whom the Duke of Wellington relied so much, had given all the glory of Repeal to Cobden. They were exhausting their energies and enthusiasm in organising a testimonial to him, and had none to spare for the reconstruction of a new Party of Progressive Reform, under the leadership of Peel. As for the Radicals and the Irish Nationalists, they would have declared war to the knife against the Minister who made Coercion for Ireland his cry. As for the Tory Party, Sir Robert was to them in the position of the man mentioned in Scripture, who found his worst foes in his own household. On the whole, it was perhaps wise that he resisted the temptation to yield to such potent influences as those of the



THE HORSEGUARDS, FROM THE
PARADE GROUND.

Queen, the Duke of Wellington, and Mr. Cobden, and firmly refused to dissolve Parliament.

The next question that disturbed the Court was what would the Duke of Wellington do? The Queen was personally most anxious that he should remain at the head of the army as Commander-in-Chief, in spite of any change of Ministry. She had, on the occasion of Sir Robert Peel's interview with her in December, when he first resigned, expressed this wish. But she knew that if the Duke consented he would unwittingly give great strength to Lord John Russell's Government, and with characteristic shrewdness she judged that Sir Robert Peel might possibly regard with little favour a proposal which was rather like asking him to lend his rival one of his strongest colleagues. But her Majesty mooted the matter with such grace

and tact, that Sir Robert Peel was not only eager to give his assent, but assured her that he would do everything in his power to remove any difficulty that might arise on the part of the Duke.* At the same time, he also undertook to convey to Lord Liverpool, for whom the Queen had a very high regard, the letter in which she earnestly urged him to retain the appointment of Lord Steward. The Duke of Wellington was well aware of Sir Robert's views, and concurred with him fully in sacrificing all considerations of party tactics to the wishes expressed by the Sovereign, whose popular sympathies interpreted national feeling with so much accuracy and precision. Thus it came to pass that when Lord John Russell's Ministry took office in July, his Grace was quite prepared to receive from the Prime Minister a personal request from her Majesty, inviting him to retain his post as Commander-in-Chief of the army. But the grim warrior felt it his duty to explain definitely, in writing, to Lord John the exact significance that was to be attached to his consent. In a letter to Lord Lyndhurst,† dated the 23rd of July, his Grace says:—"I told you that in consequence of her Majesty having conveyed to me her commands that I should continue to fill the office of Commander-in-Chief of her Majesty's Land Forces, through her Minister, Lord John Russell, I had given my consent; but that I had explained myself to Lord John nearly in the very words of, and had referred to, a letter which I had written to her Majesty in December last, when her Majesty had herself in writing intimated the same command to me, on the occasion of the retirement of Sir Robert Peel from her Majesty's service, and Lord John Russell having received her commands to form a Government. Here follow the very terms used:—"It is impossible for F.M. the Duke of Wellington to form a political connection with Lord John Russell, or to have any relations with the political course of the Government over which he will preside. Such arrangement would not conciliate public confidence, be creditable to either party, or be useful to the service of her Majesty; nor, indeed, would the performance of the duties of the Commander-in-Chief require that it should exist. On the other hand, the performance of these duties would require that the person filling the office should avoid to belong to or act in concert with any political party opposed to the Government." Her Majesty was thus made aware of the position in which I was about to place myself in case her Majesty should communicate to me her official command that I should resume the command of her army."

These matters are of some little interest to the new generation, which has been taught that in England the personality of the Sovereign counts for very little in public affairs, and who are only too ready to run away with the idea that, under a discreet and taciturn Queen, the Crown, as Mr. Disraeli

* *Memoirs of Sir R. Peel*, Vol. II., p. 246.

† *Life of Lord Lyndhurst*, by Sir Theodore Martin, K.C.B., p. 418.

once said, has become a cipher, and the Sovereign a serf. Even in her inexperienced youth we see the greatest Minister and the greatest Captain of the age paying chivalrous deference to her Majesty's personal wishes. It may be said that the incident cited is a trivial one. In our delicate and complex system of party Government no incident affecting the personal relations of a Minister of State, either to the Crown or to a Cabinet, is ever trivial. In this particular case let us ask what followed almost directly from the diplomatic success which the Queen won in persuading Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington to yield to her desire, that even under a Whig Government his Grace should still serve as Commander-in-Chief? Why, this. When Lord Lyndhurst—who, according to the ill-natured insinuations of Lord Campbell, was hankering once more after the Lord Chancellorship—began to intrigue for the purpose of reuniting the broken ranks of the old Conservative Party, he naturally turned to the Duke of Wellington after Peel received his suggestions with marked coldness. Had he won over the Duke to his project, he might have succeeded. But this very letter, which has been quoted, was written by the Duke to explain that, though most anxious to see the Party reconstructed, yet he had, at the request of the Queen, accepted the office of Commander-in-Chief, and was therefore no longer free to act in concert with “any political party not connected with the existing Administration.” It cost Mr. Disraeli the unwearying labour of a quarter of a century to do the work that might have been done in a few sessions, if Lord Lyndhurst had secured the cordial and active co-operation of the Duke of Wellington in his bold enterprise.

But reconstruction at this time was not to be. Peel had no desire to serve again as a partisan leader, or to reorganise the Party he had felt it his duty to shatter, though his career was buried in its ruins. He and his followers joined neither the Protectionists nor the Whigs. They came to be known as the Peelites, and so bitter was the feeling among their old associates that petty objections were raised against their sitting on the Conservative benches after they had quitted office. In a pamphlet privately printed at Edinburgh Sir Robert Peel was derisively recommended to solve the problem of his seat in the House of Commons by taking “another hint from Aristophanes. As we have seen him before adopt from the ‘Knights,’ the admirable trick of the sausage seller, so now he seems to have borrowed a suggestion from the ‘Clouds.’ We are given to understand that in next Parliament he will soar above parties, for he has determined to suspend himself in a basket from the roof.”*

* The Physiology of the Peel Party. Edinburgh: 1846. *Privately printed.*

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FIRST RUSSELL ADMINISTRATION.

The Transfer of Ministerial Offices—The Whigs Patronise Mr. Cobden—A Radical in the New Cabinet—The Peelites Refuse to Take Office—Lord Campbell as Chancellor of the Duchy—Anecdote of his Installation—Lord John Russell's Deportment to the Queen—His Modest Programme—The Abolition of the Sugar Duties—Bishop Wilberforce and Slave-grown Sugar—Outrages in Ireland—The Whigs become Coercionists—Their Arms Act—Mutiny among Ministerialists—The Bill Dropped—The Alternative Policy—Relief Works for Ireland—A Military Scandal—Indignation in the Country—Abuse of Corporal Punishment in the Army—"The Cat" in the House of Commons—The Queen's Views on Military Punishment—The Queen and a Deserter's Death-warrant—Captain Layard's Motion—The Duke of Wellington's Interference—Restrictions on the use of the Lash—England and the Colonies—Canada and Free Trade—Nova Scotia and the Potato Famine—The Halifax, Quebec, and Montreal Railway—The New Zealand War—The Caffre War—The Expedition to Borneo—End of the Anglo-Chinese Difficulty—The "Spanish Marriages" and the Treaty of Utrecht—Louis Philippe's Intrigues with the Queen Dowager Christina—Secret History of the Conspiracy—M. Guizot's Pretext—How the English Minister at Madrid was Deceived—Lord Palmerston's Indiscreet Despatch—The Queen's Cutting Letter to the Queen Marie Amélie—Metternich's Caustic Epigram—The Prince Consort's Resentment against the King of the French—End of the Anglo-French Alliance—Fall of the Republic of Cracow.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL had no serious difficulty on this occasion in forming a Ministry. The transfer of Ministerial offices was effected at Buckingham Palace on the 6th of July, 1846. Some recognition was due to the Anti-Corn-Law League for the aid it had given the Whigs in their contest for supremacy with the Party which had allied itself with the Protectionists. An office of Cabinet rank would have been offered to Mr. Cobden, but he was desirous of obtaining some respite from the severe strain of political life. His private affairs had suffered from his devotion to the public service, and, as his biographer admits, it would have been difficult to appoint to a high office in the State a politician whose friends were at the time collecting a public subscription on his behalf. Mr. Villiers was offered a place, but refused it. Lord John Russell finally induced Mr. Milner Gibson to represent the Free Trade Party in the Government, as Vice-President of the Board of Trade—a post devoid of high dignity and strong influence. Three of Sir Robert Peel's colleagues—Mr. Sidney Herbert, Lord Dalhousie, and Lord Lincoln—were invited to join the Government as a concession to the feeling of those who demanded a coalition. The invitation was declined. It was, in truth, one that could not have been honourably accepted, and, therefore, it should never have been made. There was no reason to suppose that these statesmen were ready to remodel their views on Coercion, as suddenly as they had recast their opinions about Corn.

Leaving Mr. Milner Gibson out of account, we may say that the new Ministry was of the conventional Whig type, the only notable addition to it being Lord Grey, who by this time had overcome his objections to serve

in the same Cabinet with Lord Palmerston as Foreign Secretary.* Lord Lansdowne, as Lord Privy Seal, led the Party in the House of Lords; Sir George Grey went to the Home Office, a perilous post in times of popular distress and discontent; Mr. C. Wood—afterwards Lord Halifax—became



LORD MACAULAY.

Chancellor of the Exchequer; Mr.—afterwards Lord—Macaulay, Postmaster-General; Lord Bessborough, Lord Lieutenant, and Mr. Labouchere, Chief Secretary for Ireland. John, Lord Campbell, joined the Ministry as Chancellor of the Duchy. He says:—"I ought to have been satisfied, for I received *two* seals—one for the Duchy of Lancaster, and one for the County Palatine of Lancaster. My ignorance of the double honour which awaited me caused an

* Lord Grey's objections were not overcome, as a matter of fact, till Lord John Russell pledged himself to exercise vigilant personal control over Lord Palmerston's Foreign Policy.

awkward accident; for when the Queen put two velvet bags into my hand, I grasped one only, and the other, with its heavy weight, fell down on the floor, and might have bruised the Royal toes; but Prince Albert good-naturedly picked it up and restored it to me.”* The programme of the Government was modest and practical, and independent men were gratified to find that social questions, such as the housing of the poor, and popular education, figured in it prominently. But it rested on no very solid basis, for it was supported by the Peelites against the Protectionists, and by the Protectionists against the Peelites. As for its own immediate followers, they shared the opinion of Mr. Bickham Escott, who, when Lord John Russell explained his position to the House, warned the Government significantly that previous Whig Ministries had failed for two reasons: they startled the people by proclaiming novel principles, and then disgusted the country by insisting on applying them prematurely. It has been said that the Ministry was not in favour at Court, and that Lord John Russell had reason to regret that he was not a *persona grata* with her Majesty. Such statements are quite unfounded, for the Queen supported her new Ministers as loyally as her old ones. Writing on the relations between her Majesty and her Prime Minister at this time, Lord Campbell says:—“He (Lord John Russell) has always risen with the occasion, and now very worthily fills the office of Prime Minister. His deportment to the Queen is most respectful, but he always remembers that as *she* can do no wrong *he* is responsible for all measures of her Government. He is enough at Court to show that he enjoys the Constitutional confidence of the Sovereign without being domiciled there as a *favourite*.”

The first question that demanded attention was that of the Sugar Duties. Lord John Russell, on the 20th of July, proposed a plan, the essence of which was a gradual reduction of the differential duties on foreign sugar, till they reached a vanishing point in 1851, when all kinds of sugar, whether of British or foreign growth, would be taxed equally. The Protectionists opposed this project on plain Protectionist principles. But the Peelites, though generally of opinion that the free-grown sugar deserved to be protected a little longer against slave-grown sugar, supported the Government, mainly because they thought a change of Ministry and a general election would be injurious to the country, whilst parties were in a confused state of transition. The second reading of the Bill was therefore carried in the House of Commons by a majority of 130; though in the House of Lords the measure was saved only by a majority of 18. In the Upper House the Government suffered considerably from the opposition of Dr. Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, whose brilliant speech, coming as it did from a strong Free Trader, turned many votes. His views, which were shared not only by a large body of impartial and philanthropic Liberals, but were even supposed to find favour at Court, where he exercised at that time great influence over Prince Albert, are

* Life of Lord Campbell, by the Hon. Mrs. Harcastle, Vol. II., p. 201.

worth reproducing. Writing to Miss Noel before the debate, he said:—"I am at present convinced (1) that no extension of Free Trade could be more beneficial to our poor producers and poor consumers at home than that to the Brazils; (2) that the probable effect of the same measure would ultimately benefit our Indian Colonies; (3) that the refusal of the measure will lead either to a dissolution of Parliament or a resignation of the Ministry, both very injurious at this moment—that I therefore earnestly desire to support the motion. But that I am *at present* convinced that the opening of this trade would lead at once and certainly to a great extension of the Brazilian and Cuban slave trade, and that no demonstrated advantages to be gained or losses to be incurred can for a single instant make me hesitate as to giving the most emphatic negative possible to such a proposal." The fallacy here is obvious. It sprang from the assumption that a nation is bound to apply its own standard of morality to the commercial institutions and customs of foreign countries, and restrict its foreign trade to those cases where foreigners accept that standard. The universal application of such a principle would soon annihilate commerce as a civilising agency in the world. The United States might refuse to trade with England, because she permitted landlords to evict Irish peasants from rack-rented farms. We might have been called on to buy no tallow or hides from Russia, because they were produced by serfs. To be consistent, the Bishop of Oxford should have demanded cessation of traffic, not only with slave States but with all free States that traded with them. It was curiously illogical to argue that by fettering trade we could free the slave.

Hardly had Lord John Russell's Government settled down in office when they were alarmed by the disturbed state of Ireland, where evictions and famine were goading the peasantry on to agrarian outrages. The Whigs were embarrassed by their opposition to Sir Robert Peel's Coercion Bill, because they had justified their tactics by belittling the disorder and lawlessness which that measure was designed to repress. Many of their own supporters accordingly complained bitterly when Ministers, on the 7th of August, invited the House to prolong the expiring Irish Arms Act till May, 1847. Lord John Russell's only excuse was, that there was a distinction to be drawn between the proposal of new coercive legislation, and a request to prolong an existing law, without which it was impossible to curb the mania for buying arms and ammunition which was seizing the Irish peasantry. The spirit and tone of the Opposition speeches during the debate on Peel's coercive measure conveyed, and were meant to convey, to the people of England and Ireland the impression that the Whigs were opposed, not merely to a Coercion Bill, but to a coercive policy, and the distinction between proposing new and prolonging old but expiring repressive legislation was generally felt to be a distinction without a difference. Lord Seymour forced Lord John Russell to withdraw the clauses in the Arms Act relating to domiciliary visits and the

branding of arms; but, though this enabled the Government to carry the second reading of the measure on the 10th of August, it was ultimately abandoned on the 17th. On that day the Government fell back on an alternative policy. They introduced a remedial scheme for the purpose of empowering local authorities (baronial sessions) to employ the destitute Irish people on relief works started by State advances, to be repaid in ten years at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. To meet the case of poor districts where repayment was impossible, an appropriation of £50,000—a ridiculously small sum—was set aside for grants in aid. Parliament, in sheer weariness, sanctioned this project, although it was warned that the scheme would divert public money from the improvement of the land to the construction of useless roads and bridges, and tempt the peasantry to neglect husbandry for well-paid labour on superfluous public works. As Mr. Disraeli subsequently said, its effect was to set a population as great as that of Holland to break stones on the roads, and, he might have added, on good roads, that were too often broken up that they might be unnecessarily remetalled.

Towards the end of the Session the House of Commons plunged into a somewhat exciting controversy over the abuse of corporal punishment in the army. This arose out of the revolting disclosures which were made at an inquest which Mr. Wakley, M.P., Coroner for Middlesex, insisted on holding on the body of a soldier named Whyte, who, on the 15th of July, had died from the effects of 150 lashes which had been administered to him by order of a court-martial. A storm of passionate wrath swept through the land when the truth, in spite of vain efforts at concealment on the part of the military authorities, was revealed. The Duke of Wellington, when he heard of the affair, exclaimed to Mr. Fox Maule, Secretary of State for War, "This shall not occur again. Though I believe that corporal punishment cannot be dispensed with, yet I will not sanction that degree of it which shall lead to loss of life and limb." In fact, his Grace had reason to fear that the Queen's indignation would be roused by this scandalous occurrence, for he knew only too well that she held very pronounced views, not altogether in accord with his own, on the subject of military punishment. On one occasion, for instance, when the Duke brought her a soldier's death-warrant to sign, she asked him, with tears in her eyes, if there was nothing to be said on behalf of the man. The Duke explained that he was an incorrigible deserter, but, after being pressed by her Majesty, admitted that the culprit's comrades spoke well of him in other respects. Her Majesty replied, eagerly, "Oh, your Grace, I am so glad to hear that," and, with trembling hand, rapidly scribbled the word "Pardoned" across the fatal scroll, and signed her name with a sigh of relief and a smile of satisfaction. Captain Layard therefore felt sure of his ground when, on the 3rd of August, he rose in the House of Commons to move an Address to the Crown complaining of the use of the lash in the army. His motion was withdrawn, but Dr. Bowring immediately gave notice



PARDONED: THE QUEEN AND THE DESERTER'S DEATH-WARRANT. (See p. 248.)

of another motion for the abolition of corporal punishment in the Service. It never came on for discussion, because the Duke of Wellington interposed, and appeased public feeling, by issuing an order restricting the powers of courts-martial, and prohibiting them from inflicting more than fifty lashes even in the worst cases.

Parliament was prorogued on the 28th of August, the Lord Chancellor reading the Queen's Speech. Her Majesty congratulated both Houses on the passing of the Corn Law Bill, on the settlement of the Oregon dispute, on the victories in India, and, oddly enough, on "a considerable diminution of crime and outrage in Ireland"—a significant commentary on the abortive attempt of Lord John Russell to prolong the existing Irish Arms Act.

During 1846 the relations between England and her Colonies were, save in one instance, undisturbed, though in Canada some traces of the bitter feeling engendered by the rebellion were still discernible. The Governor, Lord Metcalfe, had incurred considerable unpopularity, because he had not consulted the Ministry as to filling certain offices, which he maintained were Crown appointments. The old disputes, too, which arose out of attempts to charge compensation to rebels on the fund set aside for compensating loyalists for losses suffered during the rebellion, had left rankling memories behind them. Lord Metcalfe, on his death, was succeeded by Lord Cathcart, who opened the Second Session of the Second Canadian Parliament on the 20th of March. His Excellency's speech hardly pleased his audience. He referred, naturally, with great good feeling, to the death of his predecessor, Lord Metcalfe. But this only incited the minority to bring forward an amendment, which, while expressing regret at Lord Metcalfe's death, omitted all reference whatever to the manner in which he had discharged his duties. Though the Colony had no reason, said the representatives of this party, to love military governors, yet they had no objection to congratulate Lord Cathcart on his own appointment. Objectionable, however, as *his* military education might be to them, it could not, they declared, render him as objectionable as Lord Metcalfe, whose political training and experience were purely Oriental. The one topic of high Imperial importance dealt with by Lord Cathcart was his reference to the adoption of Free Trade by the mother country. The Canadians, it may be said, viewed the new commercial policy of Sir Robert Peel with the utmost alarm. The doctrine of buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest had no charms for them, for they were afraid that if the duties were taken off which gave colonial a preference over foreign grain, Canada would be ruined by American competition. On the 12th of May the Canadian Legislative Assembly accordingly adopted an Address, which gave forcible expression to the dismal prediction that Free Trade with England must impoverish Canada, and thus depress one of the best markets then open to English commerce. Mutterings of secession even ran through the Address: it

warned the Crown that, when the Canadians found they could not successfully compete with the United States in the only market open to them, they would naturally begin to doubt whether it was "a paramount advantage" to remain subjects of the British Empire. Undoubtedly the Free Trade policy of Peel, whatever good it may have done, had one baneful effect. It alienated the Canadian Colonists from the mother country.

In Nova Scotia the Governor, Lord Falkland, when he met the Legislative Assembly on the 10th of January, had, like the Queen at home, to lament the prevalence of distress due to the failure of the potato crop. But otherwise the Colonists had a good harvest, not only from the land, but from the sea. It was to this Parliament that the Government suggested the construction of a railway from Halifax to Quebec and Montreal—the first development of the policy which, by linking the different provinces of British America by bands of iron roads, rendered confederation possible.

New Zealand was the only Colony which gave her Majesty and her Ministers much serious concern during 1846. It was a dependency which was originally meant to be colonised as an experimental test of Mr. Wakefield's theories.* A Company was formed for this purpose, and its administrators were to use the proceeds of land sales, to import labour in fair proportion to the land appropriated. They were also to see that settlers did not, by dispersal, degenerate into squatters. The first ruler of the settlement, Governor Hobson and his officials annoyed the Company in the most provoking manner. They selected the land for emigrants foolishly, and they neglected to appropriate £40,000 from land sales to the immigration service. His successor, Captain Fitzroy, found the Colony with a debt of £68,000, an expenditure of £20,000 a year, and a population of 15,000. He issued £15,000 worth of paper money, which he made a legal tender; upset the terms on which settlers had bought native lands; refused on various pretexts to let emigrants, who had paid the Company cash for their lands in England, settle on them when they came out; encouraged native turbulence by ill-timed displays of sympathy; and suppressed a local Volunteer Force, offering the Colony, as a substitute, fifty soldiers, to protect a region 200 miles long, and inhabited by 10,000 persons. In fact, instead of governing the Colony, the Governor had virtually made war on the Colonists, whose hostility to him was pronounced and unconcealed. Perhaps they were a little unjust to him, for the circumstances in which he was placed were full of difficulty. He had to confront a large disaffected aboriginal population. He had only a handful of troops to support him, and there were no places of refuge or defence for the Colonists to fly to. Auckland and Wellington would thus, he thought, have been destroyed by the overpowering forces which the natives were ready to launch against the British settlers, forces which nothing could restrain, save moral influence wielded by

* See Mill's Principles of Political Economy, Book V., Chap. XI., § 14.

a conciliatory Government. However, the feeling against Captain Fitzroy in the Colony was so strong that he was recalled, and Captain Grey was sent out in his stead. His arrival was hailed with delight, for it was supposed to inaugurate a new era in New Zealand.

Governor Grey, soon after he entered on his duties, began to coerce the turbulent chiefs, whom Captain Fitzroy had attempted to subdue by diplomacy,



VIEW IN NEW ZEALAND: NEW PLYMOUTH AND MOUNT EGMONT.

and on the 10th of January Captain Despard attacked the fortified Pah or camp of the rebel chief Kawiti, with a force of 1,100 men, aided by a large number of native allies. The combat lasted for two days, for the rebels fought with extraordinary tenacity, but ultimately they had to yield. Our losses were twelve men killed and thirty wounded. The natives conducted their operations in a manner that recalled Fenimore Cooper's descriptions of Indian fighting; and their chiefs and priests harangued them every night in the ancient Homeric fashion. The reckless daring displayed by our men was the subject of many anecdotes. One of the sailors belonging to *H.M.S. Castor*, for example, climbed up to the top of the stockade during the battle, and from that coign of

vantage kept up a damaging fire on the enemy. Colonel Wynard, who was marching past, shouted out to the man to come down at once. Instead of doing that, he coolly hailed the Colonel sailor-fashion, saying, "Oh! no, your honour. This is the best place to see 'em. You jest come up and 'ave a look, sir." When the day was won the man came down without a scratch. It



VIEW IN CANTON: THE BRITISH CONSULATE.

was then discovered, however, that his cap had been shot off, that his coat had four bullet holes in it, and that the palisade on which he had perched was riddled with bullets. The success of our arms was followed by the immediate submission of the rebel chiefs. This was notified in a proclamation issued by Governor Grey on the 23rd of January, in which he granted a free pardon "to all concerned in the late rebellion, who may now return in peace and safety to their houses, where, so long as they conduct themselves properly, they shall remain unmolested in their persons and properties."

In South Africa a Caffre war or rising broke out in April, 1846, the natives attacking Graham's Town with remarkable audacity. A sharp struggle for the possession of the frontier of the Cape Colony raged for some time, but the Caffres were finally beaten in an engagement at Fish River, and, though they continued to be troublesome, they were throughout the year successfully held in check by Colonial levies.

Early in the year the Sultan of Borneo, acting under bad advice, caused an attack to be made on his uncles, Muda Hassim and Bimdureen, who were the leaders of what might be called the Anglophile or British party in the State. They were murdered along with their families and dependents. The Sultan immediately began to prepare to defend his territory against any English troops that might come to avenge the death of our allies. Sir Thomas Cochrane accordingly determined to proceed to Brunai, the capital of Borneo, to demand reparation from the Sultan. Accompanied by Mr. James Brooke (Rajah of Sarawak), H.M.SS. *Spiteful* and *Phlegethon*, with Mr. Brooke's schooner *Royalist*, Sir T. Cochrane, after a somewhat severe engagement, forced his way past the forts that guarded the river leading to Brunai. He then landed a party of marines, who took possession of the town. The Sultan and most of the inhabitants fled into the interior. An expedition sent to capture him failed, but, before leaving for China, Sir T. Cochrane issued a proclamation to the people warning them that the Sultan was at the mercy of the British, and declaring it to be our intention to return "and act with the extreme of vigour should he ever again evince hostility to Great Britain." Sir Thomas Cochrane next sailed for China, where the turbulent Cantonese were annoying the European community at Hong Kong. The disturbances in Canton, news of which reached England in September, were, however, easily quelled. About the same time her Majesty's Government was informed that all questions as to the completion of the Treaty by which the Chinese war had been settled had been peacefully adjusted. The right of entry to Canton, which that Treaty had guaranteed to us, had been withheld by the Chinese, who now formally conceded it peacefully. On our side preparations were at once made to give up Chusan, which we retained in pawn so long as the Government at Peking denied our right to enter Canton.

In 1846 the foreign policy of Great Britain brought much anxiety to the Queen. It was the irony of fate that her Government was drifting into unfriendliness with France, though the Queen personally entertained sentiments of warm friendship and admiration for King Louis Philippe and his sons and daughters. But in Switzerland and South America the policy of England and France was antagonistic. In Portugal a French faction was striving to undermine British influence, and in Spain the question of the marriage of Queen Isabella produced a serious estrangement between the two nations.

Among those who aspired to the hand of the Spanish Queen was the Count of Trapani, youngest brother of the King of Naples and the Queen

Dowager Christina, and therefore uncle of Queen Isabella. The Queen Dowager opposed his pretensions; the young Queen herself, like the great mass of her people, was also averse from an alliance with him. Another suitor had therefore to be found. England objected to a French prince being chosen, her traditional policy being hostile to whatever might bring France and Spain under one crown. France was willing to respect this objection, provided no prince but a prince of the House of Bourbon was selected as the Queen's consort. Here came the difficulty. Of those princes his Highness of Lucca was ineligible, because he was married already; the Count of Trapani was ineligible, because the Queen and her subjects disliked him; the sons of the Don Francisco de Paula, her Majesty's uncle—the Duke of Cadiz and the Duke of Seville—were ineligible because they were both disagreeable to the Queen, and, according to M. Guizot, compromised by their intimacy with the Radicals;* and Count Montemolin, the son of Don Carlos, was ineligible, first, because everybody detested him, and, secondly, because he was formally excluded from the succession by the Spanish Constitution. How, then, was the French demand that the Queen of Spain should marry one of the descendants of Philip V. to be satisfied? M. Guizot admitted, in a despatch to M. de St. Aulaire, that these difficulties were incontestable; but he added that the Court of Lisbon was the centre of an intrigue to promote a marriage between the Queen and Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, whose connection with the Royal Family of England rendered him objectionable to France. If this project were further developed, M. Guizot cunningly argued, France would be freed from the pledge she had given to England, and might then demand the hand of the Queen of Spain or her sister the Infanta, for a French prince of the House of Bourbon; in other words, for the Duc de Montpensier. It was on the perfectly gratuitous and absolutely erroneous assumption that England was promoting the candidature of the Prince Leopold, that M. Guizot made ready to play the diplomatic trick which ultimately destroyed the cordial feeling between England and France. Louis Philippe had given his Royal word to Queen Victoria at Eu in September, 1845, that in no case should the Duc de Montpensier marry the Infanta till the Queen of Spain was herself married, and had children who might assure the direct succession to her throne. But suddenly, in the autumn of 1846, it was announced that the Queen of Spain was about to marry her cousin, the Duke of Cadiz, and that her sister, the Infanta, was at the same time to marry the Duc de Montpensier. Technically, it does not appear that England had a right to complain of this double marriage as a breach of the Treaty of Utrecht. It was, no doubt, meant to evade and defeat the provisions of that instrument; but the Treaty itself had never been construed, as Lord Palmerston seemed to imagine, as a positive prohibition of all intermarriages between

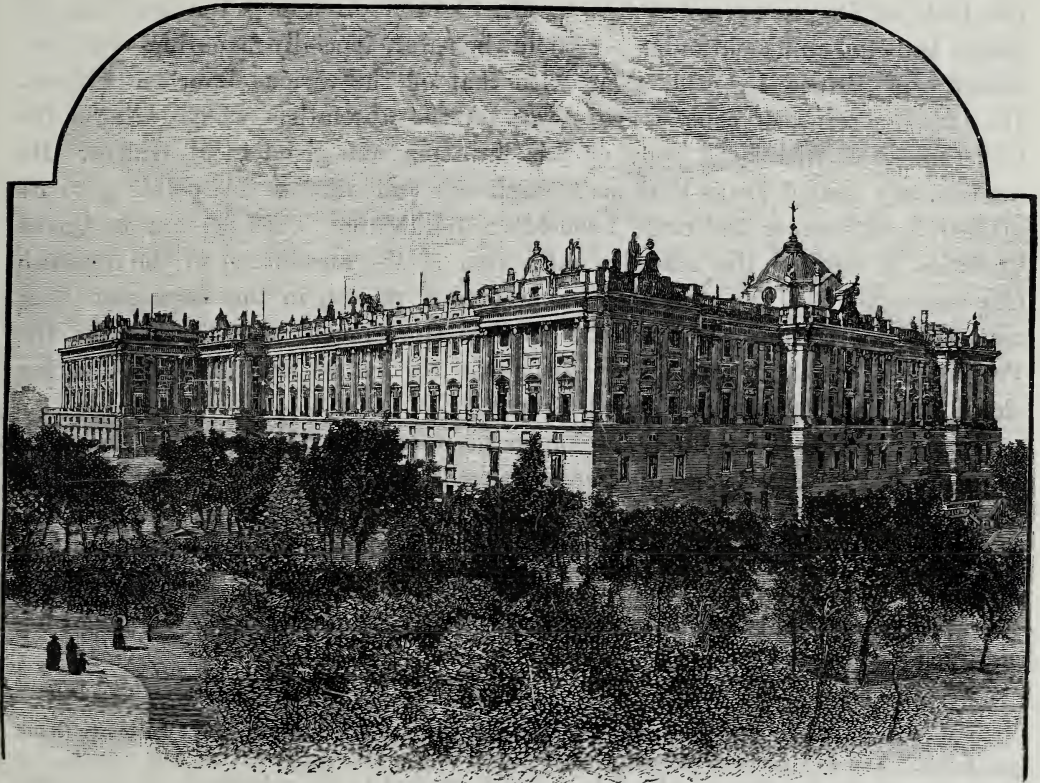
* *Memoirs*, Vol. VIII.

the Royal Families of France and Spain. For example, in 1721 King Louis I. of Spain married Louisa Elizabeth of Orleans, Mademoiselle de Montpensier and fourth daughter of the Regent of France. In 1739 Don Philip, Duke of Parma, a son of Philip V., married Louisa Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Louis XV. of France. In 1745 the Dauphin of France, as all the world knows, married Maria Theresa Antonia, Infanta of Spain, and a daughter of Philip V. In truth, it must be conceded that the Treaty of Utrecht simply stipulated that the crowns of France and Spain should not rest on the head of the same sovereign. Even if the Queen's marriage were without issue, and a child or descendant of her sister and the Duc de Montpensier had fallen heir to the French and Spanish crowns—a somewhat problematical event—the Treaty of Utrecht would have obviously operated as a bar against his claim. It would have compelled him to elect which country he should rule over. The intrigue that ended in this double marriage was regarded by England—nay, by Europe—as a piece of diplomatic knavery, and both Louis Philippe and M. Guizot suffered in character and in prestige accordingly.

The Queen was naturally more highly incensed than the nation, because from her position and her vigilant study of foreign policy she knew more than her people of the secret history of the affair. The motives of the chief conspirators in the intrigue—Louis Philippe and the Queen Dowager Christina—were rather disreputable. They utterly ignored the feelings and the interests of the young Queen, and treated her as if she were a chattel to be bartered away for their own aggrandisement. Louis Philippe's object was simply to secure for his son a consort whose dowry would still further enrich the Orleans family, the aggrandisement of his House being the dominant idea of his diplomacy. The Dowager Queen Christina had been an unjust steward of the fortune which the Queen and her sister inherited from their father, King Ferdinand VII., and for her it was therefore a vital necessity to find husbands for her daughters, who would not be too curious as to the accuracy of her accounts. It is believed that when Ferdinand VII. died he was worth £8,000,000 sterling, and though there is reason to suppose he left a will, no such instrument was ever found. After his death, however, his property was set down as being worth only 60,000,000 francs, and by law this was divided between his daughters. The Queen Dowager was said at the time to have appropriated not only the balance, but also a considerable proportion of the rents of the *Patrimonio Real*, which passed through her hands during her guardianship of her daughters. Her uncle, Louis Philippe, was understood to be cognisant of the Queen Dowager's "economies," as they were ironically termed in Spain, and he knew how her illegitimate offspring had grown rich during the minority of the young Princesses. Louis Philippe could answer for it that if his son married one of the Royal sisters, no inconvenient questions would be asked about settlements. In the Duke of Cadiz he discerned an imbecile Prince of the House of Bourbon who would be equally pliable and accommodating.

Moreover, he was supposed to be physically unfitted for matrimony, so that by arranging his marriage with the young Queen, Louis Philippe presumably calculated that the union would be without issue, which would place the children by the Queen's sister and the Duc de Montpensier in the direct succession to the throne, almost as surely as if Louis Philippe had arranged that his son should marry Queen Isabella herself.

The pledge which Louis Philippe had given to the Queen of England at Eu was an obstacle to this heartless project, but the pretext for violating it was



THE ROYAL PALACE, MADRID.

ingeniously manufactured by the Queen Dowager Christina. She addressed a letter, proposing a marriage between Queen Isabella and Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, to the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, who happened to be on a visit to the Court of Lisbon. After telling Mr. Bulwer (afterwards Lord Dalling), the British Minister at Madrid, what this letter contained, and being warned by him that the English Government could not support such a proposal, Queen Christina asked him to let her letter go in his despatch bag, by his messenger. In courtesy he could not refuse this favour, and Lord Aberdeen, when he heard what had happened, laid the facts loyally and frankly before M. Guizot. M. Guizot immediately founded on the incident his monstrous pretext that there was an Anglo-

Portuguese intrigue on foot to marry the Queen of Spain to a Prince nearly related to the Royal Family of England—the pretext which released Louis Philippe from the pledge given at the Château d'Eu. Still, Louis Philippe shrank from taking steps which he was aware must compromise his reputation; M. Guizot, however, knew how to overcome his last lingering scruples. To cherish an antipathy to Lord Palmerston, who had succeeded Lord Aberdeen at the Foreign Office, was a point of honour with Louis Philippe, who had not forgotten how France was checked in Syria in 1840, and Lord Palmerston, it must be admitted, indiscreetly played into M. Guizot's hands. He wrote on the 18th of December a despatch to Mr. Bulwer, discussing the marriage of Queen Isabella, and mentioning—without, however, specially favouring—the candidature of Prince Leopold, along with that of the various Bourbon Princes. He added a series of caustic criticisms on the absolutism which tainted the Government of Spain. A copy of this despatch was given to M. Guizot. He immediately roused Louis Philippe's suspicions and distrust by pointing to its maladroit references to Prince Leopold's candidature. Then he sent to Queen Christina a copy of the offensive references to the absolutism of the Spanish Government. She at once saw, or pretended to see, in the document indications of an alliance between the English Government and her enemies the Progressists, which it was quite reasonable for her to neutralise, by drawing closer the ties between Spain and France.

Louis Philippe, accordingly, no longer hesitated, nor did the Queen Dowager, to arrange the marriages of Queen Isabella and her sister to the Duke of Cadiz and the Duc de Montpensier—in defiance of the pledges given at the Château d'Eu. The English Government met the announcement with a diplomatic protest. The King of the French induced Queen Marie Amélie to announce the “double event” to Queen Victoria, who in reply sent the following dignified but cutting letter:—

“OSBORNE, *September 10th, 1846.*

“MADAME,—I have just received your Majesty's letter of the 8th inst., and I hasten to thank you for it. You will perhaps remember what passed at Eu between the King and myself; you are aware of the importance which I have always attached to the maintenance of our cordial understanding, and the zeal with which I have laboured towards this end. You have no doubt been informed that we refused to arrange the marriage between the Queen of Spain and our cousin Leopold (which the two Queens had eagerly desired), solely with the object of not departing from a course which would be more agreeable to the King, although we could not regard that course as the best. You will therefore easily understand that the sudden announcement of this double marriage could not fail to cause us surprise and very keen regret.

“I crave your pardon, Madame, for speaking to you of politics at a time like this, but I am glad that I can say for myself that I have always been *sincere* with you.

“Begging you to present my respectful regards to the King,

“I am, Madame,

“Your Majesty's most devoted sister and friend.”

The shrewdest comment made on this brilliant diplomatic triumph of France was Metternich's. “Tell Guizot from me,” he said, “that one does not with-

impunity play little tricks with great countries"—and Metternich was right. The loss of the English alliance ruined Louis Philippe in the eye of public opinion in Europe, and gave courage and hope to the Liberals in France, who were bent on dethroning him. Austria took advantage of the estrangement between England and France to absorb the Republic of Cracow,* in defiance of the Treaty of Vienna, so that, much to the indignation of the French people, they saw, as the firstfruits of M. Guizot's diplomacy, the last free banner and city in Poland vanish from the face of Europe. In England the feeling against Louis Philippe was one of mingled regret and disgust. The incident, writes Mr. Greville, "has been a great damper to the Queen's *engouement* for the House of Orleans."† "Nothing more painful," wrote the Queen to the Queen of the Belgians, "could possibly have befallen me than this unhappy difference, both because it has a character so personal, and because it imposes upon me the duty of opposing the marriage of a Prince for whom, as well as for all his family, I entertain so warm a friendship."‡ "Everybody," said Lord Lansdowne writing to Lord Palmerston, "would have to turn over a new leaf with Louis Philippe." As for Prince Albert, he felt the blow as a national insult and a personal wrong, though, according to Baron Stockmar, both he and the Queen exercised the greatest self-command in concealing their resentment.§

CHAPTER XV.

HOME LIFE AND SOCIAL EVENTS IN 1846.

Prince Albert and the Home Farm—Royalty and the Windsor Vestry—The New Home at Osborne—The Birth of the Princess Helena—The Visit of Ibrahim Pasha—A Royal Christening—The Queen's Loneliness—Visitors at Osborne—A Cruise in Summer Seas—The "Lop" of the Channel—In the Channel Islands—The Duke of Cornwall in his Duchy—Exploring the South Coast—The Queen Acts as the Family Tutor—Her Majesty among the Iron-miners—The House-warming at Osborne—Baron Stockmar's Impressions of the Queen—Some German Visitors—A Dinner-Party at Windsor—The Baroness Bunsen's Picture of the Scene—The Royal Visits to Hatfield and Arundel—Social Movements in 1846—Dr. Hook's Pamphlet on Education—Origin of Secularism—The Triumphs of Science—Faraday's Researches—Laying of the First Submarine Cable at Portsmouth—The Use of Ether in Surgery—Evil Tidings from Starving Ireland.

EARLY in 1846 the Royal Family became involved in a little local dispute that gave the Queen some slight annoyance, and afforded busybodies a great deal of material for gossip. It was one of those incidents which serve to remind Royalty that in a free country even the most exalted station affords no

* In the *Edinburgh Review*, Vol. LXXXV., there is an article on the seizure of Cracow, which, though not written by Prince Albert, one might almost say was dictated by him.

† C. C. Greville's *Journal of the Reign of Queen Victoria*, Vol. II., p. 421.

‡ Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort*, Chap. XVII.

§ Stockmar's *Memorabilia*.

protection from the tyranny of Bumbledom. The history of the affair is briefly as follows. The parochial rating authorities of Windsor had long cast hungry eyes on the Flemish Farm occupied by Prince Albert. It was a good subject for rating if it could be rated. Thinking that the Prince would be afraid of exposing himself to public odium, and would therefore contribute submissively to the support of the poor of the parish, a rate was levied on him by the local officials. But his Royal Highness resisted the claim, and pleaded, at the request of the Queen, that the farm was Royal property, which, being in Royal occupation, was exempt from rates. The most celebrated legal authorities were consulted, and agreed with his Royal Highness. Hence the following letter was sent to the official who represented the parish:—

“WINDSOR CASTLE, 14th January, 1846.

“SIR,—I am commanded by his Royal Highness Prince Albert to acknowledge the receipt of the memorial which you have forwarded to me from the parish officers of Windsor, and in reply to state, that when a claim was preferred for the payment of rates by the Prince on account of the Flemish Farm, and when the legal liability of the Prince was insisted upon by the Vestry, his Royal Highness felt himself precluded from admitting such a claim without previous consultation with the highest legal authorities.

“His Royal Highness submitted the whole facts of the case to the Attorney- and Solicitor-General of her Majesty, and subsequently to Sir Thomas Wilde. Their opinion was, that his Royal Highness was not liable, in point of law, to the payment of rates, and that the admission by him of such liability might constitute a dangerous precedent, affecting the prerogatives of the Crown.

“In the letter which I addressed to you on the 15th of December, I informed you ‘that his Royal Highness had no disposition to resist any claim that could in fairness be made upon him, whatever might be the legal obligations.’ I have now to inform you, on the part of his Royal Highness, that if the parochial authorities had continued to insist on the payment of the demand, made as a matter of legal right, his Royal Highness would have felt himself compelled, by a sense of the duty which he owes to her Majesty, to resist the claim.

“You have informed his Royal Highness that the Vestry of Windsor has passed resolutions of which the following are copies:—

‘That the Vestry extremely regrets that the resolutions in reference to the rating of his Royal Highness Prince Albert passed at the Vestry Meeting held on the 18th September last, should have been so carried, inasmuch as this meeting is now fully aware that his Royal Highness is not in any way liable to be rated for Flemish Farm; and that this Vestry deprecates the garbled statements set forth in the public journals on this subject.’

“Again—

‘That inasmuch as the maintenance of the poor presses heavily on the parishioners, a respectful memorial be now presented to his Royal Highness, praying him to take the state of the parish into his gracious consideration, and that such memorial be prepared and presented by the parish officers.’

“His Royal Highness infers from these resolutions that the Vestry distinctly admits that his Royal Highness is not in any way liable to be rated for the Flemish Farm; and his Royal Highness feels himself at liberty to take the course which is most satisfactory to his own feelings, and to pay as a voluntary contribution, a sum equal to the rate which would have been annually due had the legal liability of his Royal Highness been established.

“It is also his Royal Highness’s intention that the payment of the sum referred to should commence from the year 1841.

“I have the honour to be, your faithful and obedient servant,

“Henry Darvell, Esq.”

“G. E. ANSON.

This untoward dispute seemed as if it had been created for the purpose of worrying the Royal Family by putting Prince Albert in a false position, and

its termination in so satisfactory a manner was deemed most creditable to the Prince at the time. It, indeed, helped to render the Prince popular with the middle classes. They saw in him a typical British ratepayer, who had fought with rating authorities, even as "with beasts at Ephesus," and yet survived the strife to enjoy his victory.

The political atmosphere of London became so highly charged with party passion that her Majesty and Prince Albert, early in February, determined to migrate to the country. Accordingly, they proceeded to the Isle of Wight, where they were building a new country-house at Osborne, and where the



WINDSOR CASTLE.

Queen herself said, in one of her letters, it was "a relief to be away from all the bitterness which people create for themselves in London." Here her Majesty and her family led a simple, happy, peaceful life, enjoying to the fullest extent all the innocent delight of planning and laying out the grounds round their new home. But in March they had to return to town, and again plunge into the excitement and agitation of political strife. This period was peculiarly trying for the Queen, because on the 25th of May she gave birth to a daughter—the Princess Helena—whose advent into a troubled world was heralded by salvoes of cannon from the Tower. The event rendered her Majesty unable to receive personally his Highness Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt, who was one of the "lions" of the London season in 1846, and who had been entertained with sumptuous hospitality at the Court of France. Prince Albert, however, did what lay in his power to make his Highness's visit pleasant, and on the 11th of June her Majesty was able to meet him. He dined with the Queen on the evening of that day, and left our shores expressing

the utmost satisfaction with the welcome he had received from the Sovereign and the country whose diplomacy had checked his conquering march in Syria.

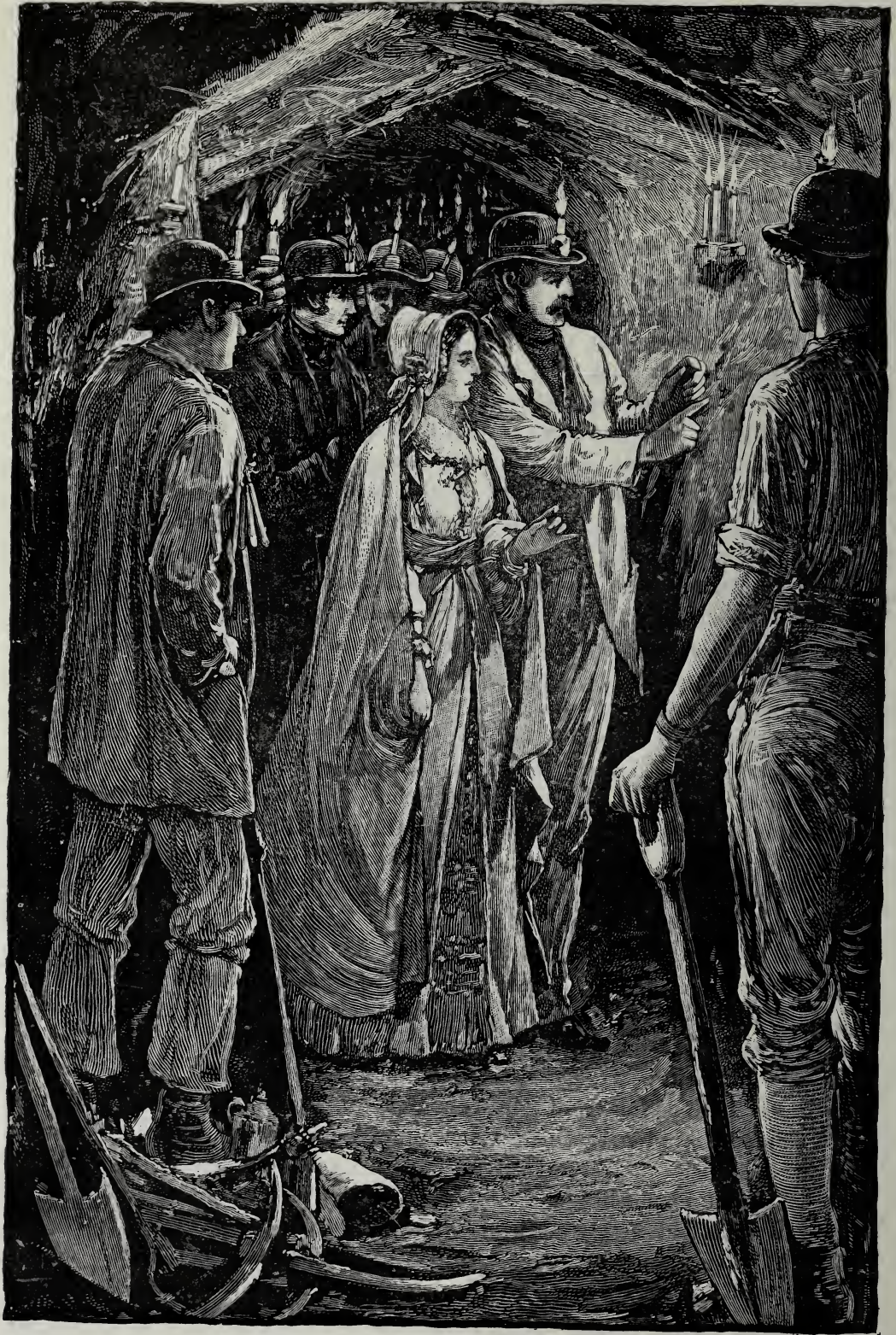
When the elections, which Lord John Russell's assumption of office rendered necessary, had been held, her Majesty and the Court again left town, and migrated to their seaside retreat in the Isle of Wight. The balmy air and the peaceful life revived the Queen, who had been greatly depressed in spirits at parting with her Ministers, and she was further cheered by the promise of her uncle, King Leopold of Belgium, to pay her a visit in time for the christening of the baby Princess. His Majesty and Queen Louise were unable to arrive, however, till a few days after the ceremony, which took place at Buckingham Palace on the 25th of July. The little lady received the names of Helena Augusta Victoria, her godmother being Hélène, Duchess of Orleans, who, as sponsor, was represented by the Duchess of Kent. The other sponsors—the Hereditary Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz and H.R.H. the Duchess of Cambridge—were happily able to attend in person. At the end of the month the Queen again found her cherished home circle broken, for Prince Albert was summoned away to Liverpool to open the magnificent Albert Dock in that city, on the 30th of July. The reports of his speeches, and the enthusiastic reception with which he was met, brought brightness to the life of the Queen; but in spite of all that, she evidently could not conceal her sadness of heart when the head of her family was absent. "As I write," said the Prince, with a touch of playful but affectionate sarcasm, in a letter to the Queen, dated Liverpool, the 30th of July, "you will be making your evening toilette, and *not* be in time for dinner." Her Majesty, however, had apparently very little thought of the ceremonial part of her life in her mind at the time, for she was writing to their old friend, Baron Stockmar, a pretty touching letter, saying, "I feel very lonely without my dear Master; and though I know other people are often separated for a few days, I feel habit could not get me accustomed to it. This, I am sure, you cannot blame. Without him everything loses its interest. . . . It will always be a terrible pang to separate from him, even for two days; and I pray God never to let me survive him." In the last words there is indeed a note of pathos which, in view of the long and lonely widowhood of the Queen, cannot fail to touch the hearts of her home-loving people.

At the beginning of August the Court circle was again happily reunited at Osborne, the King and Queen of the Belgians being of the company. The Queen then decided to proceed on a quiet yachting cruise along the south coast of England, and accordingly the Royal yacht, with the Royal Family, and accompanied by the *Fairy* and the *Eagle*, on the 18th of August left the island and steamed westward. The weather, however, was far from propitious, for it blew more than half a gale when, on the 19th, the little pleasure-squadron rode out the storm in Portland Roads. Prince Albert cannot have enjoyed this part of the trip, for the "lop" in the Channel was not at

all to his liking. In a letter, replying evidently to some allusions to the disagreeableness of the voyage, Lord Aberdeen, writing from Haddo House, says to the Prince, though content with life in that far-off northern solitude, "I confess that in reading of her Majesty's progress, I have sometimes wished to find myself on the Royal yacht, even off the Race of Portland."* When the Royal party arrived at Portland Roads the sea was so rough, and the wind was blowing so hard, that at first it was feared they could not land. Ultimately, they did get ashore, and a salute from the Nothe battery warned the town of their arrival. There was great excitement among the people, who gave their visitors a warm welcome. Her Majesty is reported to have looked fresh and well, but the poor Prince, her consort, bore traces in his pale face of having suffered a good deal. On the 19th, however, the party, including Lord Spencer, Lord Alfred Paget, Baron Stockmar, the Hon. Ann Napier, and Lady Jocelyn, sailed away in fair weather to Devonport. They drove to Astonbury, the seat of the Earl of Ilchester—then absent in the south of France—to see his lovely grounds and curious swannery, and subsequently went on to Weymouth, the Queen again giving orders that she desired as little fuss as possible to be made about her visit. She landed at the steps which had always been used for that purpose by George III. The country folk, through whose villages they passed, despite Lord Alfred Paget's assurances, refused to believe that such a quiet and unassuming party of tourists included the Queen and her Court. A pleasant time was passed as they skimmed over the sunlit waters of the Tamar, and examined the ancient and picturesque mansion of the Mount-Edgewcombe family. They next sailed up the Plym to Lord Morley's seat at Saltram. Then, when Sunday came round, they stood out to sea and steered for the Channel Islands.

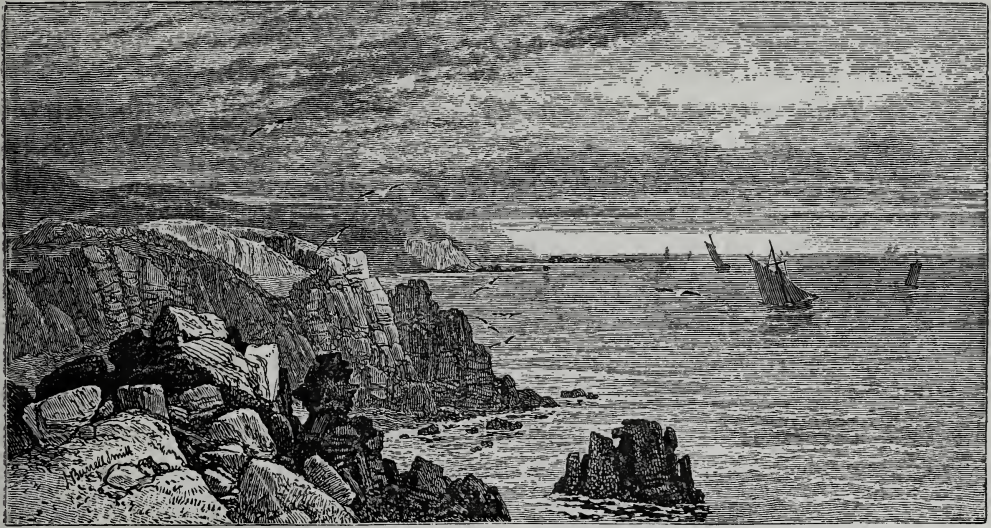
This was an exceptionally interesting incident in the tour, for, since the days of King John, no English sovereign had till then set foot in the old Norman fief of the Crown. Little wonder that Guernsey was all excitement when they landed. Loyal cheers and addresses greeted the Queen and her family wherever they went; and the young Prince of Wales, by reason of his dress, which was that of a miniature seaman, attracted universal attention. Bands played and guns fired salutes, and pretty girls in white strewed the path of their young Queen with flowers. A brief visit to Jersey threw St. Helier into a frenzy of loyalty; after which the Royal yacht steamed for Falmouth, carrying the little Prince of Wales to see his Duchy of Cornwall for the first time. "A beautiful day again," writes the Queen in her Diary, on the 4th of September—a Diary which is full of charming descriptions, in her own vivid but artless style, of this excursion—"a beautiful day again, with the same brilliantly blue sea. At a quarter to eight o'clock we got under weigh. There was a great deal of motion at first, and for the greater part of the day the ship pitched, but getting up the sails steadied her. From

* Martin's Life of the Prince Consort.



THE QUEEN VISITING A CORNISH IRON MINE. (*See p. 266.*)

five o'clock it became quite smooth; at half-past five we saw land; and at seven we entered Falmouth Harbour, where we were immediately surrounded by boats. The calmest night possible, with a beautiful moon, when we went on deck; every now and then the splashing of oars and the hum of voices were heard, but they were the only sounds, unlike the constant dashing of the sea against the vessel which we heard all the time we were at Jersey." At eight o'clock next morning (September 5th) the Royal party left Falmouth, rounded the Lizard, and skirted the bold and rugged coast that leads to Land's End. Here, much to the delight of Prince Albert, the sea was



ON THE CORNISH COAST : PRADANACK POINT.

smooth. "A little before two," writes the Queen, "we landed in the beautiful Mount's Bay, close below St. Michael's Mount, which is very fine. When the bay first opened to our view the sun was lighting up this beautiful castle, so peculiarly built on a rock which forms an island at high water." The sun shone out gloriously as the Queen passed Penzance, and the smooth sea spread itself like an azure plain under a cloudless sky. "Soon after our arrival," she says, "we anchored, and the crowd of boats was beyond everything; numbers of Cornish pilchard fishermen, in their curious large boats, kept going round and round, and then anchored, besides many boats full of people." "They are," says her Majesty, "a very noisy, talkative race, and speak a kind of English hardly to be understood." "During the voyage," adds the Queen, with maternal satisfaction, "I was able to give Vicky (H.I.H. the Empress Frederick) her lessons;" indeed, all through these yachting cruises the Queen insisted, in true English fashion, on acting personally as her children's teacher. In fact, it was only when the pressure of public and social duty became too severe for such labours that her Majesty

would ever consent to delegate the tuition of her children to others; and even then, she and Prince Albert bestowed on it most vigilant personal superintendence. In the afternoon the Royal party, "including the children," rowed to the *Fairy*, and steamed round the bay. They visited St. Michael's Mount and the smelting works at Penzance, which monopolised the attention of Prince Albert. "We remained here," her Majesty writes, "a little while to sketch, and returned to the *Victoria and Albert* by half-past four, the boats crowding round us in all directions; and when 'Bertie' (the Prince of Wales) showed himself the people shouted, 'Three cheers for the Duke of Cornwall.'"

Next day they visited the quaint little town of Marazion, or Market Jew, which lies behind the Mount, where the Jews used to traffic in old times. They inspected the castle, and Prince Albert played on the organ in the chapel, to the great delight of the Queen and "the children;" after which he made what the Queen describes as "a beautiful little sketch" of St. Michael's Mount itself. On the following day (the 7th) the municipal dignitaries of Penryn invaded the Royal yacht, and begged to be introduced to "the Duke of Cornwall." "So," writes the Queen, "I stepped out of the pavilion on deck with Bertie, and Lord Palmerston told them that that was the Duke of Cornwall; and the old Mayor of Penryn said 'he hoped he would grow up a blessing to his parents and to his country.'" The Fal, winding between wooded banks of dwarfed oaks, and the beautiful Ruan, with its shores clad with foliage to the water's edge, were explored; and at the city of Truro, says the Queen, the whole population turned out on the banks to give her a welcome, "and were enchanted when Bertie was held up for them to see." On the following day the Royal tourists visited Fowey, "driving," writes the Queen, "through some of the narrowest streets I ever saw in England," and proceeding to the ivy-clad ruins of Restormel, a castle which belonged to "Bertie" as Duke of Cornwall.

Here her Majesty was bold enough to explore the iron mines. "You go in on a level," she writes. "Albert and I got into one of the trucks and we were dragged in by the miners, Mr. Taylor" (mineral agent to the Duchy) "walking behind us. The miners wore a curious woollen dress with a cap, and they generally have a candlestick in front of the cap. This time candlesticks were stuck along the sides of the mine, and those who did not drag or push carried lights. The gentlemen wore miners' hats. There was no room to pass between the trucks and the rock, and only just room enough to hold up one's head, and not always that. It had a most curious effect, and there was something unearthly about this lit-up cavern-like place. We got out and scrambled a little way to see the veins of ore, and Albert knocked off some pieces." On the way back they visited Lostwithiel; and then they returned to Osborne, vastly delighted and refreshed by their tour.

The Queen's new house at Osborne was now ready for occupation, and she and her husband held a "house-warming" ceremony on the 16th of September.



THE MUNICIPAL DIGNTIARIES OF PENRYN INTRODUCED TO THE PRINCE OF WALES.

"Our first night," writes Lady Lyttelton in one of her letters, "in this house is well spent. Nobody smelt paint or caught cold, and the worst is over. . . . After dinner we were to drink to the Queen and the Prince's health as a *house-warming*. And after it the Prince said, very naturally and simply, 'We have a hymn' (he called it a psalm) 'in Germany for such occasions. It begins,' and then he repeated two lines in German which I could not quote right—meaning a prayer to bless our going out and coming in."* Miss Lucy Kerr, one of the Maids of Honour, insisted in her Scottish fashion on throwing an old shoe after the Queen as she crossed the threshold for the first time, and she further diverted the company by her desire to procure molten lead and sundry other charms of Scottish witchcraft to bring luck to the Royal pair.

During the yachting cruise round the south coast, Baron Stockmar appears to have used his opportunities of close and intimate companionship with the Queen and her consort to note the changes that time had wrought in their characters. In his "Memorabilia" he records his impressions. "The Prince," he writes, "has made great strides of late. . . . He has also gained much in self-reliance. His natural vivacity leads him at times to jump too rapidly to a conclusion; and he occasionally acts too hastily; but he has grown too clear-sighted to commit any great mistake." "And the Queen also," writes the same keen and watchful critic, "improves greatly. She makes daily advances in discernment and experience; the candour, the love of truth, the fairness, the considerateness with which she judges men and things, are truly delightful; and the ingenuous self-knowledge with which she speaks about herself is simply charming."†

In the autumn, too, some other German friends cheered the Queen with a visit. The Princess of Prussia, afterwards the Empress Augusta, came on a visit to her aunt, the Queen Dowager Adelaide, and in September her Royal Highness went to Windsor. The Baroness Bunsen, who was in her suite, has given us a charming picture of the happy family circle round the Queen into which she then found herself introduced. In a letter to her mother from Windsor Castle, the Baroness writes:—"I arrived here at six, and at eight went to dinner in the Great Hall, hung round with the Waterloo pictures. The band played exquisitely, so placed as to be invisible; so that, what with the large proportions of the hall, and the well-subdued lights, and the splendours of plate and decoration, the scene was such as fairy tales present; and Lady Canning, Miss Stanley, and Miss Dawson were beautiful enough to represent an ideal Queen's ideal attendants. The Queen looked well and *rayonnante*, with that pleased expression of countenance which she has when pleased with what surrounds her, and which, you know, I like to see."‡

In October the Queen and Prince Albert paid another round of visits.

* Martin's Life of the Prince Consort.

† Stockmar's Memorabilia.

‡ Life and Letters of Baroness Bunsen, by A. J. C. Hare, Vol. II., p. 92.

They left Windsor on the 19th and drove to the Queen Dowager's place at Cashiobury, where they spent three days in strict privacy. After that they drove to Lord Clarendon's seat near Watford, and went on to the Marquis of Abercorn's at Stanmore Abbey. Taking a circuitous route by Reading, they drove to Hatfield, where they visited the Marquis of Salisbury. But the weather was most disagreeable, and even St. Albans failed to put up the usual arches of welcome, and bedeck itself in congratulatory bunting. Four miles from Hatfield they were met by Lord Salisbury and the



ARUNDEL. (After the Picture by Vicat Cole, R.A.)

Duke of Wellington. There was a pleasant party of friends at Hatfield waiting to welcome the Royal guests, including Lord Melbourne and Lord John Russell, the latter brooding over the growing uneasiness of the country and the painful dispute with the Court of France, the former gay and debonair, as if he had never known what it was to face the storms and strife of State. The Queen, it seems, was greatly interested in the treasures of the library, and spent much time poring over the Cecil papers. Her visit was long talked of in the district, for, in true baronial style, five hundred labourers were feasted in commemoration of the event at Hatfield, a great ox being roasted for the banquet, at which home-brewed ale flowed generously in hogs-heads. In December her Majesty visited the Duke of Norfolk, Master of the Horse, at Arundel. At Portsmouth and Chichester she was welcomed with

cordial demonstrations of affection, and not only was Arundel illuminated, but, what pleased her still more, a substantial dinner was given in her honour to every poor person in the town. Prince Albert, Lord John Russell, and the Earl of Arundel amused themselves with field sports; but the Queen,



PROFESSOR FARADAY.

attended by her host, the Duke of Norfolk, and the old Duke of Wellington, explored objects of interest in the neighbourhood. She held a formal reception in the great drawing-room of the Castle, and charmed all the "country people" with her simple, winning ways and sweet courtesies. It is recorded that at the ball held after this reception her Majesty distinguished herself by the hearty manner in which she joined in the dancing, an amusement which was ever a favourite one with her in those happy days of her golden youth.

But life in the Royal circle was not all amusement. Baron Stockmar bears testimony to the zeal with which both the Prince and the Queen devoted themselves at this time to business and graver studies. And many events were happening, many intellectual and social movements beginning to develop, which keenly interested them. The unsatisfactory position of British art—emphasised by the fate of Haydon, who committed suicide in despair of ever interesting the English people in the higher forms of art—the development of the great movement in favour of popular education, and the rise of what afterwards came to be known as the Party of Secularism, were keenly canvassed during the latter part of this eventful year in every circle where thoughtful men and women met.

Among the many remarkable movements that arose when the country was liberated from the strain of the Free Trade agitation, was that which originated the strife between parties as to the share which the Church and the State should take in the work of education. A crude and rudimentary scheme of national education was part of Lord John Russell's programme, and the attention of the country had been excited by a pamphlet published by the late Dr. Hook, then Vicar of Leeds, afterwards Dean of Chichester, in which he proposed a plan which very much resembles that which the late Mr. W. E. Forster induced Parliament to accept in 1870. Her Majesty and Prince Albert were deeply interested in Dr. Hook's plan, the leading points of which were: (1) Schools to be universally supported by the State; (2) Education to be secular, but one day in the week to be set apart for religious instruction, which should be given by each denomination to the children of its own members.

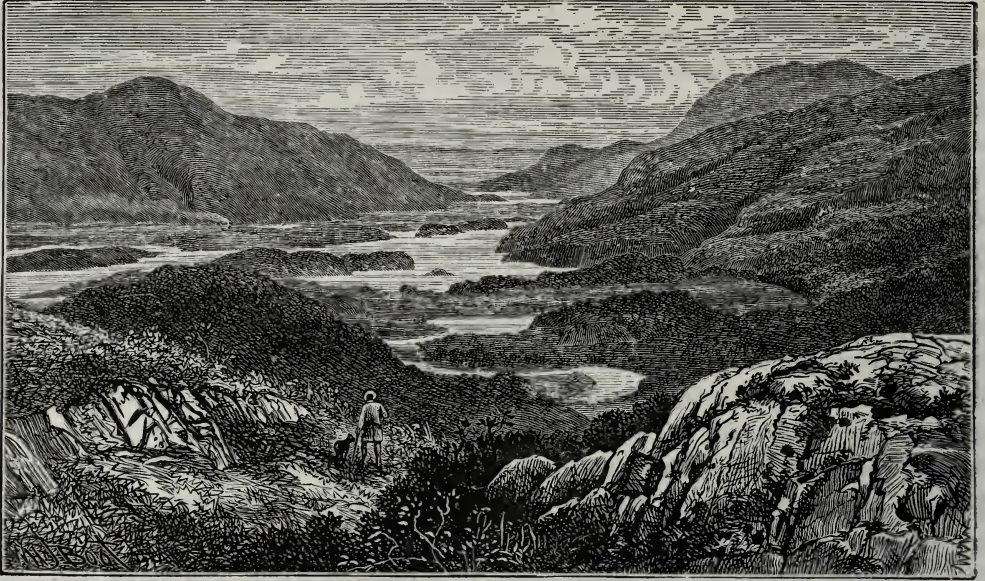
The Secularist Party owed their origin to Mr. Holyoake, who at this time began to propagate the system of ethics known as Secularism, a system which aimed at promoting the welfare of mankind by human means, and measuring it by utilitarian standards. The service of others he held to be the highest duty of life. Secularism rejoiced in life as the sphere of exalting duties. It was a religion of doubt, neither affirming nor denying the existence of a Deity. Ultimately it came to be termed Agnosticism, and the working classes seemed to be considerably influenced by Mr. Holyoake's teaching during this year and a few of the years that followed.

In the year 1846 the scientific world was greatly interested by the publication of a most extraordinary series of experimental researches in electricity conducted by Faraday, illustrating alike the genius of the man and the spirit and methods of scientific investigation during the early part of the Victorian epoch. That spirit was, in the main, antagonistic to vacuous speculation or unprofitable theorising. It was daring enough in its utilitarianism to track by direct experiment the subtle elements of, or prove by tangible demonstration what were the occult relations which subsisted between, forms of matter and modes of force. "I have long held the opinion,"

wrote Faraday, "that the various forms under which the forces of matter are made manifest have one common origin, or, in other words, are so directly related and mutually dependent, that they are convertible, as it were, into one another, and possess equivalents of power in their action. . . . I recently resumed the inquiry by experiment in a most strict and searching manner, and have at last succeeded in magnetising and electrifying a ray of light and in illuminating a magnetic line of force."* The phrase is not a felicitous one to express the idea of the transformation and transmutation of the forces, but it is worth citing as the original expression used. The paper from which it is taken simply proved that a ray of polarised light sent through certain transparent substances in the line of action connecting the two poles of a magnet, became visible or invisible just as the current was flowing or was stopped. In another paper "On New Magnetic Actions," Faraday proved that a non-magnetic body suspended freely in the line of a magnetic current is repelled by either pole, and takes up a position at right angles to the line, and, therefore, at right angles to the line a magnetic body would assume in similar circumstances.

But perhaps one of the most interesting events, to Prince Albert at least, was the laying of the first submarine telegraph cable at Portsmouth on the 13th of December, 1846. In the year 1843 telegraphic communication from the Nine Elms terminus at Portsmouth to Gosport had been established. Then the wires were continued to the Clarence Victualling Yard. The harbour, however, still intervened between the end of the wire and the Port Admiral's house, and it was supposed to be impossible to connect the two points electrically under water. The first plan suggested was to lay the wires in metal cases, to be fixed in position by divers with diving-bells. But it was finally agreed to lay the wires in a stout cable, and this was done without the use of a return wire. The first message sent over it thus demonstrated that water would act as a ready conductor in completing the electrical circuit, and almost immediately projectors were developing a plan for laying a submarine cable to France. This and the discovery of the use of ether as an anæsthetic in surgery—the first painless operation being performed on a patient under its influence by Mr. Liston in University College Hospital—were the chief practical achievements in science during a year which closed with anxious forebodings from Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland, where the scourge of famine was again smiting the people.

* Experimental Researches in Electricity, by Michael Faraday, Esq., D.C.L., F.R.S., &c. From the Philosophical Transactions, Part I. for 1846.



THE LAKES OF KILLARNEY.

(From a Photograph by W. Lawrence, Dublin.)

CHAPTER XVI.

A DISTRESSFUL COUNTRY.

The Irish Crisis—Famine and Free Trade—Evictions and Imports—Fiscal Policy and Small Holdings—Shocking Scenes among the Irish People—The Mistake of the Government—Lord John Russell's Relief Measure Rejected by his Colleagues—An Autumnal Cabinet Meeting—Opening of Parliament—The Queen and the Distress—The Remedial Measures of the Government—Rival Schemes of the Protectionists—Lord George Bentinck's Railway Subsidies Bill—A Rival Ministerial Scheme—The Attack on the Bank Act of 1844—The Currency Controversy—Peel on a Convertible Currency—The Effect of the Railway Mania—Blaming the Bank—The Education Question—Opposition of Dissenters—Colonisation and Emigration—Lord Lincoln's Motion—Is Emigration a Remedy for a Redundant Population?—The Cabinet and the Ten Hours Bill—Mr. Fielden's Victory—Opposition of Manufacturers—Evading the Act—The Budget—The Queen and the Duchy of Lancaster—Lord Campbell and the Queen—A Famous Duchy Dinner—Privy Councillors at "High Jinks"—Death of Lord Bessborough—Lord Clarendon appointed Irish Viceroy—Death of O'Connell—Growing Weakness of the Cabinet—Prorogation of Parliament—Dissolution—The General Election—The State of Parties—Appalling Outrages in Ireland—Another Commercial Panic—Suspension of the Bank Act—The Queen and Sir Robert Peel—Parliament Summoned—A Coercion Bill for Ireland—Ireland and the Vatican—Lord Palmerston's Correspondence with Lord Minto—Denunciations of the Queen's Colleges—Projected Renewal of Diplomatic Relations with Rome—Lord Palmerston's Objections—The Jews in Parliament—New Bishops—The Hampden Controversy—Baffled Heresy-hunters.

DISTRESS is the word that sums up the life of the nation during 1847. If there be any inadequacy in the summary, it may be made good by the addition to it of—sectarian bigotry. Famine in Ireland, two commercial panics in England, religious controversies of the narrowest and most paltry character, and over all, the wind of Socialism moaning bodefully—there, in a sentence, we have a picture of this melancholy year. It will spot black in English history as the year of the Great Irish Famine. Whether Free Trade did or did not aggravate the distress in Ireland will always be a moot point with

writers and historians who are partisans. The Protectionists warned Parliament that Free Trade would bring hard times to the rural poor in Ireland, and in 1847 they began to take credit for being good prophets, for it was



GLENDALOUGH VALLEY, CO. WICKLOW—VIEW IN GLENDALOUGH.

(After Photographs by W. Lawrence, Dublin.)

not only famine that had to be dealt with in that country; it was famine plus pauperism and pestilence.

Looking back at the condition of affairs that obtained in Ireland in 1847, one is surprised that statesmen did not foresee what was coming. Irish industries, with the exception of the manufacture of linen, had been crushed by the commercial policy of England. It was not till 1825, a quarter of a century after the Union, that a true commercial union between Ireland and Great Britain was effected, and absolute Free Trade was established

between the two countries. By that time English industries had got a great start, and when Free Trade was conceded to Ireland, she was no longer fit to compete with England, even in the industries that were indigenous to her soil. But as her wealth was chiefly agricultural, in husbandry, at all events, she might have been expected to hold her own. The high prices that followed the wars with France made Irish farmers, large and small, both rich and prosperous. But in 1815 the piping times of peace brought ruin to many of them. The fall in prices tempted the tenants to demand more land, so that, by carrying on tillage on a larger scale, they might be able to hold the market. This logically led to consolidation of holdings, which, in turn, led to evictions, agrarian outrage, and crime.

In one respect, however, the position of Ireland was safeguarded. The Corn Laws, which imposed a prohibitory duty on foreign grain, allowed Irish corn to enter the English market freely. Corn was therefore largely grown in Ireland under Protection. But when Protection was abandoned, Irish farmers lost the only prop they had—the tariff which left them profits in excess of rent. The effect of Free Trade in Ireland was naturally to reduce prices. It therefore did not pay after 1846 to grow corn in Ireland, and the alternative crop was cattle. But the rearing of cattle is best managed on a large scale and on large farms. Hence a movement in Ireland was set on foot for further consolidation of holdings—a movement, in other words, for a fresh policy of eviction that brought outrage in its train. Mr. Jephson has shown that “the adoption by Great Britain of free importation of food supplies from any part of the world must have revolutionised Irish agriculture and vitally affected the circumstances of the Irish, and it is not on the political connection between the two countries (which the Nationalists are now trying to break), but it is on the economic dependence of Ireland on England (which is unbreakable) that must be thrown the responsibility.”* A very curious and instructive table of figures might be drawn up to prove this point:—

AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS IN IRELAND.

Year.	Above One Acre to Five Acres.	Above Five Acres to Fifteen Acres.	Above Fifteen Acres to Thirty Acres.	Above Thirty Acres.
1841	310,436	252,800	79,342	40,625
1851	88,083	191,854	141,311	149,090
1861	85,469	183,931	141,251	157,833
1871	74,809	171,383	138,647	159,303
1881	67,071	164,045	135,793	159,834

Thus it is seen that since Free Trade was adopted, small holdings in Ireland have been diminishing, whereas large holdings have been increasing; and that would be in favour of Lord George Bentinck's contention, which in

* *Times*, 13th January, 1886.

1847 gave the utmost annoyance to Mr. Cobden and his friends, that Free Trade caused the Irish Famine. Perhaps the true view is, that in manufacturing districts, where the mass of the people did not live by selling produce from the soil, the fall in the price of grain which followed Free Trade was a boon. To a country like Ireland, on the other hand, where the mass of the people lived on the profits of tillage on a small scale, Free Trade came as a disaster. Coupled with the failure of the potato crop, it meant famine in 1847.

Literally, the great mass of the Irish people were by this time starving. Their savings were gone, and as for economising, it was hopeless. A nation that lives on potatoes alone—the cheapest and worst form of human food the earth can yield—has already lowered its standard of comfort to zero. Beggary is the only alternative to a potato diet: for potato-feeders, as Mr. J. S. Mill has observed, “retrenchment is impossible.” Public works were therefore started for the relief of the people, and to these tottering skeletons dragged themselves in despair, often to die almost as soon as they began their task. A few ounces of oatmeal were reckoned a day’s ration for a family, and those who survived cold and hunger were swept away by typhus. The scenes in the overcrowded workhouses recalled the horrors that are immortalised in Defoe’s “History of the Plague.” In the towns the sufferings of the people were not less keen and cruel. “Daily in the street,” writes Mr. A. M. Sullivan in “New Ireland,” “and on the footway, some poor creature lay down as if to sleep, and presently was still and stark. In one district it was a common occurrence to find, on opening the front door in the early morning, leaning against it the corpse of some victim who in the night had ‘rested’ in its shelter. We raised a public subscription and employed two men with horse and cart to go round each day to gather up the dead. One by one they were taken to Ardrahahair Abbey, and dropped through the hinged bottom of a ‘trap coffin’ into a common grave below. In the rural districts even this rude sepulchre was impossible. In the fields and by the ditches the victims lay as they fell, till some charitable hand was found to cover them with the adjacent soil.” And yet during this time, as Lord George Bentinck said, the food exports of Ireland were greater than those of any other country in the world, not merely relatively but absolutely in proportion to people or area. As Mr. Henry George observes,* “grain and meal and butter were carted for exportation along roads lined with the starving, and past trenches into which the dead were piled.”

During the preceding autumn the Government had quite under-estimated the gravity of the situation in Ireland. They had given a pledge that they would not disturb the food market, and they relied on the ordinary capital of the nation to obtain supplies for a starving country, in the greater part of which there was by this time neither capital nor commerce. They imagined

* Progress and Poverty, Chap. II.



THE IRISH FAMINE: INTERIOR OF A PEASANT'S HUT.

that the law of supply and demand would feed the people, and that whenever hunger smote them in a desolate district, there merchants and retailers of food would spring up as if by magic. Meetings of the Cabinet Council were



LORD BROUGHAM, 1850. (*From a Sketch of the Period.*)

held, it is true; and a glimpse at their deliberations is afforded us by Lord Campbell, who says he was summoned to attend a meeting of the Cabinet on the 20th October, at which the impending aggravation of the calamity was discussed. He adds:—"Lord John Russell has been severely blamed for not

having immediately made an Order in Council to open the ports for the introduction of corn *duty free*. He actually proposed this measure, but was overruled, his colleagues being almost unanimously against him. In our then state of knowledge I think we were right not to tamper with the law as it had been recently settled, particularly as an Order in Council of this nature would have induced a necessity for the immediate meeting of Parliament, which, on account of the state of Ireland, was universally deprecated. The course we adopted was applauded till the accounts of Irish destitution became daily more appalling. We employed ourselves in considering the Bills which were to be brought forward at the meeting of Parliament, and Committees of the Cabinet were appointed to prepare them. Cabinet dinners were given once a week, and we were still in good spirits, hoping that the scarcity of this winter would not be more severe than that of the preceding.”* Ministers were painfully undeceived.

When the Session of Parliament opened on the 19th of January, 1847, the Queen, in reading her speech, seemed downcast and sorrowful, and her voice is said to have trembled and fallen low as she spoke of the sufferings of the Celtic population, and commended the patience and exemplary resignation with which their hardships were borne. And well might her voice and heart sink, for at that time the newspapers teemed with descriptions of scenes of suffering in Ireland, more harrowing than any which the most lurid pages of history record—scenes in which pestilence dogged the track of famine, and perishing wretches fought with each other like wild beasts for carrion. They were more dreadful even than those that live for ever in the ghastly narrative of Josephus, and, as Lord Brougham said in the Upper House, they recalled the canvas of Poussin and the dismal chant of Dante.†

Lord John Russell explained, on the 25th of January, the plans of the Government. Some £2,000,000 were advanced to feed the Irish people on doles of Indian meal, and to give them work and wages. A new Irish Poor Law, based on the English principle that property must support pauperism, was introduced, much to the disgust of the Irish landlords. The Corn Law and Navigation Acts were to be temporarily suspended. The Tories, not to seem laggards in the race of philanthropy, through Lord George Bentinck brought in a Bill to raise £16,000,000 for the construction of new railways in Ireland, so that employment might be given to the poor. His plan was that for every £100 expended on a line, £200 should be lent to its promoters by the Government at the same rate of interest at which it had been borrowed, and it was significant that in drafting his measure Lord George had been guided by Mr. Hudson, “the Railway King,” who made railways, and Mr. Alderman Thompson, who supplied materials for their construction. The House rejected the project as one designed to invest the money of the taxpayers

* Life of Lord Campbell, Vol. II., p. 215.

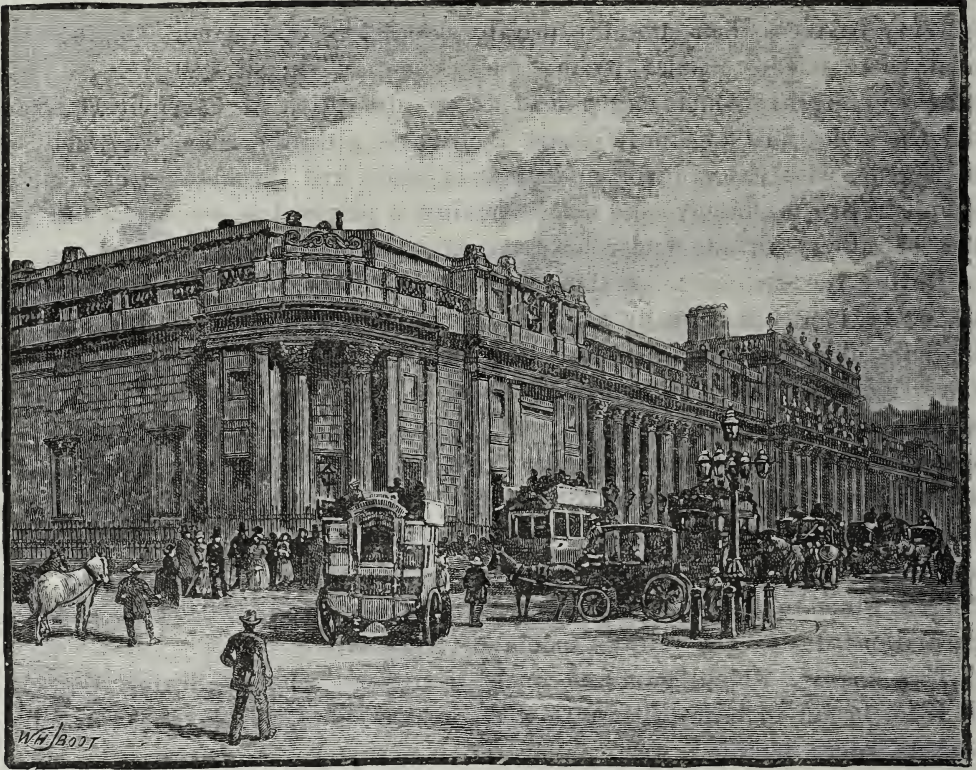
† Hansard's Debates, 19th January, 1847.

in speculative enterprises for the benefit of financial "rings," who had duped the Protectionist leader. Ministers, however, to the surprise of the House, followed up this rejected measure with a Bill of their own on the 26th of April, providing for advancing Treasury Loans, amounting in all to £620,000, repayable at 5 per cent. interest, to Irish railways, 50 per cent. of whose capital was paid up. In fact, it was the fag end of Lord George Bentinck's proposal, and, as Sir Robert Peel said, if the Government had saved money on the expenditure in relief works, it would have been wiser to increase the Treasury balances than subsidise private speculators in Ireland. On the other hand, there was a popular feeling that some aid should be given to Irish railway enterprise, which might lead to an absorption of unemployed labour, and the objections to Lord George Bentinck's gigantic scheme—namely, its interference with the ordinary operations of trade, and the absence of adequate administrative machinery—did not lie against a proposal to assist great arterial lines of railway already under construction.

During the discussions on these measures, Sir Robert Peel's Bank Restriction Act of 1844 was continually attacked by the Protectionists as the cause of the prevailing financial distress. The object of that Act was to insure the convertibility of paper currency into gold, so that the holder of a bank-note might always be certain that he could get an equivalent in coin for it on demand. The country was suffering from a scarcity of money to trade with, and this scarcity was traced to the restriction of the Bank's paper issues. On the contrary, it was really due (1) to failure of the food crops, which involved a loss of £16,000,000 sterling of capital; (2) to the rise in the price of cattle, due to a failure of crops; (3) to a loss of £16,000,000 in gambling speculations during the railway mania of 1845-46.

This mania, which produced such monstrous schemes during the close of 1845, began to bear evil fruits when holders of scrip, in face of falling markets, were haunted with visions of bankruptcy. A return was issued, by order of the House of Commons, containing the names of the unhappy individuals who, during the Session of 1845, had subscribed towards railways in England, Scotland, and Ireland, for sums of less than £2,000. It is a huge catalogue, extending over 540 folio pages, and forms the oddest jumble of "all sorts and conditions of men." Vicars and vice-admirals elbow each other in the reckless race after easy-gotten gain. Peers struggle with printers, and barristers with butchers, for the favours of Mr. Hudson, "the Railway King," who was the presiding genius of this greedy rabble. Cotton-spinners and cooks, Queen's Counsel and attorneys, college scouts and Catholic priests, editors and flunkeys, dairymen and dyers, beer-sellers and ministers of the Gospel, bankers and their butlers, engineers and excisemen, relieving officers and waiters at Lloyd's, domestic servants and policemen, engineers and mail-guards, with a troop of others whose callings are not describable, figured in the motley mob of small gamblers. Lord

Beaconsfield's brilliant and satirical sketch of Mr. Vigo's fortunes in "Endymion" is based on the mania with which Mr. Hudson infected England, and which exhausted the floating capital of the country in a time of famine. In the beginning of 1846, when in obedience to the Standing Order of the House the deposit of 10 per cent. on railway capital had to be lodged with the Accountant-General, the Money Market was greatly alarmed. It



THE BANK OF ENGLAND.

was estimated that £10,000,000 would have to be lodged in compliance with the law on the 29th of January, and on the 10th the *Times*, in a memorable article, declared that to lock up half that sum for a week in the circumstances would produce "the greatest inconvenience and pressure."*

It was in vain that the officers of the Crown and the Government were implored by the trading community, who dreaded a Gold Famine, to sanction a deviation from the rigid rule of the Standing Order in face of the exceptional outbreak of an epidemic of speculation. This reached its height, it seems to us, just a month before the Governor of the Bank of England could be persuaded that the potato-rot was rendering famine inevitable. In the quarter ending September, 1845, there were in the market for sale £500,000,000 of

* *Times*, City Article, 10th January, 1846.

stock, scrip, or letters of allotment. The shocking waste of resources that this covered is proved by two sets of figures. According to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the years 1842-46, the capital authorised to be raised was in each year respectively £6,000,000, £4,500,000, £18,000,000, £59,000,000, and for the last of these years £126,000,000! In 1842-45 the amounts



THE QUEEN IN THE ROYAL GALLERY, ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL.

(After the Portrait by G. E. Dawe, 1846.)

expended, however, were only £3,000,000, £4,500,000, £6,000,000, £14,000,000, and £36,000,000. In the latter half of 1846, of an authorised capital of £146,000,000, only £27,000,000 was spent. But in the records of the Victorian epoch there is nothing more curious than this fact—that of the vast sum expended during this mania, one-fifth was spent on buying land and on Parliamentary expenses, and the remaining four-fifths on materials and labour, skilled and unskilled. Some idea of the resources and the

folly of the England of Queen Victoria's youth may be gained from the fact that, during the period 1843-47, £170,000,000 were raised—£130,000,000 by shares and £40,000,000 by loans—in order to open 3,665 miles of railway for traffic.* It has been said that the Railway Mania was at its height in the quarter ending September, 1845. The Bank rate of interest then stood at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. In November it rose to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and then panic smote timid investors. They glutted the market with their shares. And yet the curious thing is that the witnesses who were examined before the Committee of the House of Commons on Commercial Distress seem to agree in asserting that the general trade of the country was active at the time, and that very few people had the slightest suspicion that it was utterly unsound. Mr. R. Gardner of Manchester, in his evidence, gave an excellent and vivid sketch of industrial England at this period, when he said: "The commercial difficulty began, I think, about the middle of 1846. A good deal of business was done in 1846, but trade was not in a wholesome state; it appeared to flourish by the great abundance of money, and the great facility in getting long paper discounted. . . . I think, in the early part of 1846, *we were at about the height of our apparent prosperity*. . . . In the manufacturing districts there was a greater supply of goods than was justified by the demand. Immediately after the China Treaty, so great a prospect was held out to the country of a great extension of our commerce with China, that there were many large mills built with a view to that trade exclusively, in order to manufacture that class of cloth which is principally taken for the China market. . . . This trade turned out most ruinous; the losses averaged from 10 to 60 or 70 per cent."† This is a fact which may be commended to the attention of a powerful Party in the latter years of the Queen's reign which cherishes the perfectly erroneous belief, that an aggressive foreign policy necessarily and invariably stimulates commerce by "opening up new markets."

No issue of paper money in 1847-48 could relieve a strain due to such causes as these, though some blame must be given to the Bank for not checking the drain of gold by raising the discount rate at the beginning of the year, when the failure of the potato crop in Ireland was manifest. But to issue £2,000,000 of notes without any increase in the real capital of the country, which could alone command foreign produce, would have been an illusory measure of relief. The heated discussions on these and cognate questions ended in May; in June the pressure on the Money Market began to be relaxed, and the crisis passed away for the time—only to reappear, as we shall see, later on in the autumn.

The Education Vote in 1847 raised a great storm of sectarian controversy,

* Return in Appendix D to the Report of the Committee of the House of Commons on Commercial Distress. 1848. P. Paper, No. 395.

† Report of the Committee of the House of Commons on Commercial Distress. Minutes of Evidence. 1848: Q. 4861-4876.

not only in Parliament, but throughout the country. The first sign that the State in England gave of awakening to the educational destitution of the country was in 1833, when the House of Commons voted £20,000 in aid of elementary public instruction. In a burst of generosity, £39,000 was voted in 1839. In 1845 the grant was raised to £100,000, but the money could only be shared by Protestant schools, because the Privy Council decreed that no school was to be subsidised unless "the Authorised Version of the Scriptures" was read in it. This of course cut off the Roman Catholics from any participation in the grant; and when, in 1847, the Education Vote came before the House of Commons, all liberal-minded men condemned the sectarian restrictions in dispensing the grants which were imposed by the Government. Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Macaulay, and Sir W. Molesworth all attacked the regulation of the Council, which pressed so harshly against the Roman Catholics; and Lord John Russell was fain to give pledges that the rule would be relaxed. During these debates, some of the High Church Tories, like Sir Robert Inglis, the Member for the University of Oxford, accused Peel of supporting the policy of Toleration in order to conciliate Catholic voters at the coming election. It is curious to note that the plan of the Government, offering equal pecuniary aid on equal terms to all schools accepting Government inspection, was opposed by the Dissenters; and even Mr. Bright declared that it was a dangerous interference with the voluntary exertions of the people to educate themselves. At this time it was thought a lesser evil to let the children of the poor remain ignorant, than to establish a system of education which was made applicable to all sects, by omitting distinctive points of sectarian teaching from the lessons given in the schools. The Dissenters objected to the Established Church getting a new endowment in the shape of grants in aid of their schools. The Secularists objected to public money in any form being spent in subsidising sectarian schools, even though these were under State inspection.

In June the subject of colonisation stirred up some discussion in the country. Ever since Mr. Charles Buller, in 1843, had emphasised the distinction between colonisation and emigration, a party had existed who taught that it was not wise to leave the settlement of our Colonial Empire to the chances of casual or voluntary emigration. Lord Lincoln attempted to enforce their teaching by drawing the attention of the House of Commons, on the 1st of June, 1847, to the importance of this question in its bearing on Irish distress. He moved an Address to the Queen praying her to take into consideration the means by which colonisation might be made subsidiary to other measures for the benefit of Ireland. He urged that the Government should endeavour to direct the surplus or redundant labouring population of Ireland to Canada and Natal, and suggested the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry. The plan was opposed by Mr. Vernon Smith as vague, and as likely to prove too costly for an embarrassed country like Ireland; and by Lord John Russell, who thought that the Colonies would be alienated if the mother

country led them to suspect she was exporting to them the dregs of her population. Still, on the general principle that it was well for a weak Government to be conciliatory, Lord John Russell permitted Lord Lincoln to carry his Address, but only on the understanding that it was not to lead to any practical result.



JOSEPH HUME.

Emigration, however, was a painful remedy for famine in Ireland, because the Celt regards exile with horror. Nor was the emigrant in those days treated very much better in his journey over the Atlantic, than the slave during the time when tales of the "middle passage" thrilled the nerves of English philanthropists. The overcrowding in the ships was scandalous, most of them carrying double their complement of passengers, utterly regardless of the law. Twelve times as many died on the voyage, as perished in ordinary

circumstances. In quarantine the death rate rose from 1·75 to 40 per 1,000. Three thousand emigrants are said to have perished in Montreal in half a year. The emigrants were weaklings, ill-fitted for the rough life of a colony, and, when they landed with the symptoms of famine fever, they were shunned like lepers, save when they found a refuge in a hospital. "There is no subject," says the late Sir Charles Trevelyan, "of which a merely one-sided view is more commonly taken than that of emigration. The evils arising from the



THE WOODS BEFORE THE EMIGRANT: VIRGIN FOREST IN CANADA.

crowded state of the population, and the facility with which large numbers of persons may be transferred to other countries, are naturally uppermost in the minds of landlords and ratepayers; but her Majesty's Government, to which the well-being of the British population in every quarter of the globe is confided, must have an equal regard to the interests of the emigrant and of the colonial community of which he may become a member. It is a great mistake to suppose that even Canada and the United States have an unlimited capacity of absorbing a new population. The labour market in the settled district is always so nearly full, that a small addition to the persons in search of employment makes a sensible difference; while the clearing of land requires the possession of resources and a power of sustained exertion not

ordinarily belonging to the newly-arrived Irish emigrant. In this, as well as in the other operations by which society is formed and sustained, there is a natural process which cannot with impunity be departed from. A movement is continually going on towards the backwoods on the part of the young and enterprising portion of the settled population and of such of the fewer emigrants as have acquired means and experience, and the room thus made is occupied by persons recently arrived from Europe who have only their labour to depend on. The conquest of the wilderness requires more than the ordinary share of energy and perseverance, and every attempt that has yet been made to turn paupers into backwoodsmen has ended in signal failure. As long as they were rationed they held together in a feeble, helpless state, and when the issue of the rations ceased they generally returned to the settled parts of the country.”*

These considerations were rather lost sight of in this curious discussion which, with the best of motives, Lord Lincoln initiated. The feeling of the landed class as reflected in the debate was that, whenever too many people were reared on their estates, the Government should in some way or other help them to get rid of their surplus labour. In Ireland for years a redundant population had been encouraged for political purposes by the landlords who owned their votes; and it is curious to observe that those who favoured the growth of that population do not seem to have considered that they, and not the State, should assist them to emigrate. A redundant population in every case is obviously an incident of property in land, and it has to be endured and dealt with like any other drawback of territorial ownership. The landlord who has to pay out of his own pocket the emigration expenses of his surplus labourers, will not be eager to promote emigration to an extent likely to injure his country.

The weakness of the Government was further illustrated by their manner of dealing with the Labour Laws. They did not, like their predecessors in Sir R. Peel's Ministry, flatly oppose all projects for lessening the hours of factory work. But they refused to make them Ministerial questions, though it must be admitted that Lord John Russell, undismayed by the attitude of the Radical manufacturers, did not flinch from supporting these benevolent measures.

Here it may not be amiss to say that for several years Lord Ashley had fought hard to get what was called the “Ten Hours Bill” carried—the Bill limiting the hours of employment of children and young persons in factories. The Tory Government had opposed and thwarted him. Radical Free Traders like Mr. Bright had been among his fiercest antagonists. Lord Ashley's courage, however, was undaunted, and he persistently returned year after year to the charge. In 1846, unfortunately, he disappeared from the Parliamentary arena. He approved of Sir Robert Peel's Free Trade policy, but deemed it his duty to resign his seat, so that his constituents in Dorsetshire, who had elected

* *Edinburgh Review*, 1848.

him as a Protectionist, might express their opinions on his change of front. They rejected him, and thus it came to pass that Mr. John Fielden, Member for Oldham, took charge of the Ten Hours Bill in his stead. Mr. Fielden was hopeful of making progress with the measure because, though Sir Robert Peel and his colleagues had steadily opposed it, the chief of the new Ministry, Lord John Russell, had favoured the project. Then it so happened that a large number of the old Tories who followed Lord George Bentinck were to be counted on as sympathetic allies. The repeal of the Corn Laws they regarded as a blow dealt by the manufacturing class at the landed interest. If they voted now for the Ten Hours Bill, they would in turn be dealing a blow at the manufacturing interest—and, moreover, they would be delivering a vote of vengeance against the Peelites. When on the 26th of January Mr. Fielden obtained leave to bring in a Bill limiting the hours of labour of women and children in factories to ten hours a day, the Government seem to have found it an embarrassing question. They therefore determined to treat it as an “open” one. They appear to have arranged that whilst the Chancellor of the Exchequer—Sir C. Wood—and Mr. Milner Gibson should vote against the Bill, Lord John Russell, Lord Morpeth, and Sir George Grey should vote for it, distinctly saying at the same time that they desired not a ten hours but an eleven hours Bill. It has been usual to represent the beneficent factory legislation with which Lord Ashley’s name is associated as one of the triumphs of Tory policy. It was nothing of the kind. For years the Tory Government, under Peel’s guidance, had resisted the measure, and Lord Ashley’s chief antagonist in those days was Sir James Graham. Lord Ashley was a Peelite himself—but Peel was one of the strongest opponents of a measure the principles of which, however, his father approved. Against the Bill the chief speakers were Mr. Joseph Hume, Mr. Bright, Dr. Bowring, Mr. Mark Phillips, and Mr. Roebuck. For the Bill were Mr. Fielden, Lord John Manners, Mr. Newdegate, Mr. Muntz, Mr. Sharman Crawford, and Sir Robert Inglis—an odd mixture of Liberals and Tories. On the 17th of February the second reading was carried by a vote of 195 to 87, and Lord John Russell received the most effusive expressions of gratitude from all parts of the country, for using his influence as Premier in favour of the Bill. The third reading passed by a majority of 88, and in the Lords the opposition, despite the furious assault which Lord Brougham made on the measure, dwindled down so that the second reading was carried by a vote of 53 to 11.

Yet the Bill was not a model Bill. The Factory Act of 1844 fixed 69 hours a week as the working time for women and children. Mr. Fielden’s Act fixed the hours at 63 from the 1st of July, 1847, and at 58 from the 1st of May, 1848. But it allowed the period in the day when employment was offered to remain as fixed by the Act of 1844. The Act of 1847 was therefore systematically evaded. The ten hours’ work could be exacted between 5.30 a.m. and 8 p.m. Mills were accordingly kept running during the full period of employment, with what the

mill-owners pretended to be “relays” of hands, but in such a manner that the inspectors found it impossible to prevent breaches of the law. The competition in business was so keen that an extension of the “shift” and “relay” system was inevitable—and the Act was so badly drawn that when the legality of the system was tested, the Court of Exchequer ruled that it was not forbidden.

The Session of 1847 was dull. Members were worn out by the reaction



THE LOWER WARD, WINDSOR CASTLE.

from the passionate excitement and the repeated shocks of those Ministerial crises which exhausted Parliament in 1846. One gap in the long line of Irish relief measures we can descry, and even then it was made by an eleemosynary measure giving compensation to West India planters for the loss they were likely to suffer from the abolition of the differential duties on foreign sugar. A Bill to shorten service in the army, and one establishing a new Bishopric at Manchester, were also among the measures passed during the Session. On the 22nd of February the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Charles Wood—afterwards Lord Halifax—made his financial statement. Wood was a member of the Grey section of the Cabinet, and it was of him in after-years that Mr. Grant Duff once impudently remarked, “Providence, in its inscrutable purposes, had deprived him of clearness of



LORD CAMPBELL'S AUDIENCE OF THE QUEEN. (See p. 290.)

expression—nay, almost of the gift of articulate speech itself.” The reporters of the old school used to tell merry tales of their difficulties in making sense of his financial speeches, but with some of his colleagues he was popular. He showed courage in fighting the Irish famine, and he did not flinch in the monetary crisis of October which followed it. But his *brusquerie* of manner and indistinctness of speech made many enemies, especially among deputations who waited on him. He was not, therefore, the fittest person to make heavier demands on the national purse than had been heard of for many years—and yet that was just what he did. But there was one consoling fact on which he dwelt. In spite of distress, the revenue from customs and excise during 1846 had far exceeded Mr. Goulburn’s estimates. It had left Sir C. Wood with a balance of £9,000,000 in hand, and though it showed no signs of falling off, yet a commercial crisis was to be looked for similar to those of 1825 and 1836. Sir C. Wood therefore estimated for a forthcoming revenue of £52,065,000; but then he said he had to provide for an expenditure which, owing to the changes wrought by the introduction of steam power into the navy and the arsenals, must rise to £57,570,000. Still, as £10,000,000 would be wanted as extraordinary expenditure on Irish distress, there was a deficit to be made good. This he proposed to meet by borrowing £8,000,000—the other £2,000,000 consisted of advances to local authorities, and would be repaid—fresh taxation being ill adapted to hard times. His surplus was £489,000, and to it would be added £450,000 he hoped to get from China. The Famine Loan was floated at £3 7s. 6d. per cent., but so eager were the Government to get the money that a discount of 5 per cent. was by a resolution of the House of Commons ordered to be given to those who paid in their contributions before the 18th of June.

During the early part of the Session the Queen’s interest seems to have been chiefly limited to the ceremonial side of affairs, though, of course, foreign policy, which she made a constant study, the affairs of the Duchy of Lancaster, and, in some degree, the measures for relieving famine, engaged her attention. As to ceremonies, her Majesty and Prince Albert were always curious, and keen to trace out the origins of the old customs to which she had to defer. “On Thursday,” writes Lord Campbell in a letter, dated 6th February, 1847, “I went down to Windsor and shook hands with Prince Albert, the Prince of Wales, and their Royal Highnesses the Princess Royal and the Princess Alice. By-the-by, there was an amusing scene in the Queen’s closet. I had an audience that her Majesty might prick a Sheriff for the county of Lancaster, which she did in proper style with a bodkin I put into her hand. I then took her pleasure about some Duchy livings and withdrew—forgetting to make her sign the parchment roll. I obtained a second audience, and explained the mistake. While she was signing, Prince Albert said to me, ‘Pray, my Lord, when did this ceremony of pricking begin?’ CAMPBELL: ‘In ancient times, Sir, when sovereigns did not know how to write

their names.' QUEEN (as she returned me the roll with her signature): 'But we now show that we have been to school.'"

Her Majesty's interest in the affairs of the Duchy was abiding. Writing on the 9th of March to his brother, Lord Campbell says:—"I have been to Osborne attending a Council. Had it not been so bitterly cold I should have enjoyed it. I had a private audience of her Majesty; and when my business was over she said, 'How you were attacked in the House of Lords the other night, Lord Campbell—most abominably.' I gave a courtier-like answer," adds this unblushing old political comedian, "without telling her Majesty of the dinner I am to give on Saturday to Lord Stanley and Lord Brougham" (who had attacked him), "for she was excessively angry with them; and she would not understand the levity with which such matters are treated among politicians of opposite parties."* The attack, it may be explained, was due to an indiscreet proposal made by Lord John Russell to appoint new Councillors for the Duchy without a view to Party, who should serve permanently. Lords Lincoln, Hardwicke, Spencer, Portman, and Sir James Graham were named, and the whole project was attacked as a Whig job, designed to conciliate the Peelites, whose precarious alliance was worth purchasing. When the fight was over, Campbell invited all the combatants to dine with the Councillors, old and new; and he gives a most amusing account of the banquet—telling how all these public enemies met on the easiest of convivial terms in private; how Brougham "shook hands with the Premier, and called him John;" and "Stanley said to Sir James Graham, 'Graham, how are you?'" and how Brougham "related a supposed speech of Sir Charles Wetherell's, complaining that death is now attended with a fresh terror from Campbell writing the life of a deceased person as soon as the breath was out of his body." One wonders if the Queen would have wasted much sympathy on Campbell, or much indignation on his enemies, had she known that they "sat at table till near eleven," and that, as "Lyndhurst was stepping into his carriage, he was overheard to say to Lord Brougham, 'I wish we had such a Council as this once a month.'"

It is pleasing, however, to record that those who had to deal not only with the hereditary but private revenues of the Sovereign had proved themselves this year able and faithful servants. On that topic Mr. Charles Greville writes in his Journal, on the 8th of March, 1847:—"George Anson told me yesterday that the Queen's affairs are in such good order, and so well managed, that she will be able to provide for the whole expense of Osborne out of her revenue without difficulty; and that by the time it is finished it will have cost £200,000. He said also that the Prince of Wales, when he came of age, would have not less than £70,000 a year from the Duchy of Cornwall. They have already saved £100,000. The Queen takes for his maintenance whatever she pleases, and the rest, after paying charges, is invested in the Funds or in land, and accumulates for him."

* Life of Lord Campbell, Vol. II., p. 218.

The death of Lord Bessborough in June left the Viceroyalty of Ireland vacant; and there was some difficulty about selecting his successor. Lord John Russell would have abolished the office and appointed a Secretary of State for Ireland, but for the menaces of the Repealers and Orangemen. The two favourite candidates for the post were the Duke of Bedford, who was afraid to take it, and Lord Clarendon, who was anxious to have it; but who desired to make the world believe that he was making a great sacrifice

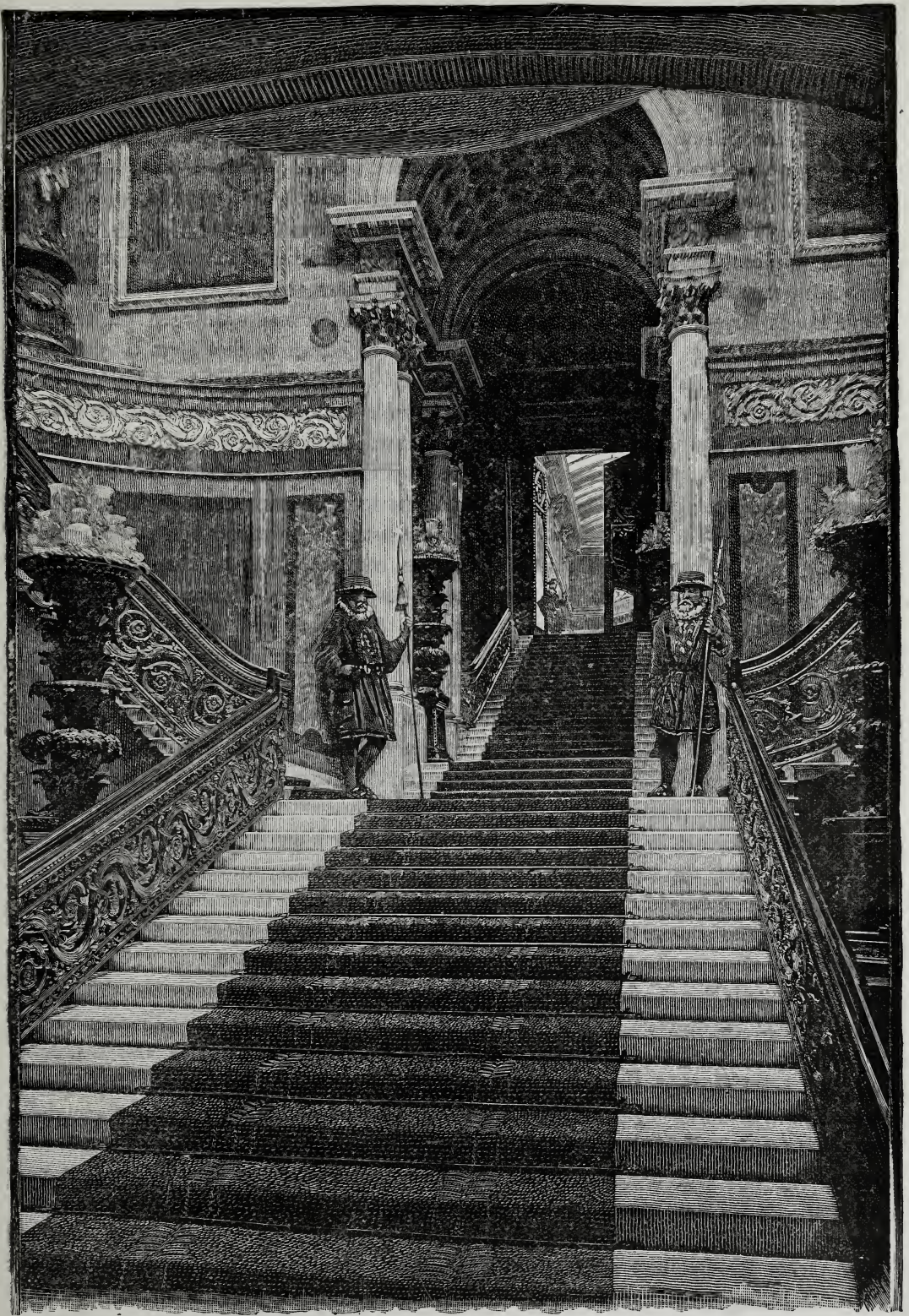


THE CUSTOM HOUSE, DUBLIN.

in accepting the office. He was ultimately appointed, and for five years ruled Ireland well, with a firm and neutral hand.

The death of O'Connell on the 15th of May, at Genoa, "made little or no sensation here,"* says Mr. Greville. He had quarrelled with half his followers, and the younger Repealers had grown sick of his policy of fruitless agitation. But in Dublin, when the news was posted in Conciliation Hall, vast crowds of mournful patriots assembled and silently read the placards. The Catholic chapels tolled their dismal death-knells, and the Corporation met and adjourned for three weeks as a mark of respect for the Liberator's memory. In the famine-stricken districts the anguish of public sorrow sharpened the pangs of popular distress. His remains were laid in Glasnevin cemetery with imposing funereal pomp and pageantry. Indeed, no funeral in Ireland has ever been more numerous attended, for it was reckoned that at least 50,000 persons marched in the procession of mourners. Few people of high rank and station were there; but the middle and lower classes of the populace

* C. C. Greville's *Journal of the Reign of Queen Victoria*, Vol. II., p. 35.



THE GRAND STAIRCASE, BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

(From a Photograph by Mr. H. N. King.)

were conspicuous. Even many afflicted persons from the poorest quarters were found struggling at daybreak round the mortuary chapel in Marlborough Street, to catch one glimpse of the remains of a man whom they believed to have been sent on earth with a divine mission, whose ultimate translation to the saints was to them a certainty, and a sight of whose very corpse might perchance work a miracle that would cure their infirmities.

The Cabinet, despite the weakness of its action, the instability of its support, and false reports of dissensions among its Members, had held well together. Even Lords Grey and Palmerston behaved as if they had ever been on terms of fraternal amity. In July, however, Ministers began to feel that they were in office but not in power. Bill after Bill had to be withdrawn. Some of the Peelites, too, whose support was necessary, took umbrage at the effusive compliments which were bandied about between Lord John Russell and Lord George Bentinck; indeed, this feeling was shared by Sir James Graham and by Peel himself. Concessions were made to opponents to an extent that destroyed the prestige of the Ministry, which, though indispensable, was neither popular nor respected. In July, the Cabinet therefore came to the conclusion that it would be well to appeal to the country to return a new House of Commons which might fill them with fresh strength. Ministers had appointed a Committee to feel the pulse of the constituencies, of which Lord Campbell, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, was one; and they reported that not a day should be lost in bringing about a Dissolution in the interests of the Party. So eager were they to go to the country at once that "it was even suggested," says Lord Campbell, "that, to expedite the Election by a day, the Queen should dissolve Parliament in person from the Throne. I found one precedent for this since the Revolution, in Lord Eldon's time; but I pointed out a better expedient—that the Queen should prorogue, as usual, and that, holding a Council immediately after, she should then sign the Proclamation for the Dissolution and the calling of a new Parliament, the writs going out by the post the same evening. This course was successfully adopted."

The Dissolution took place on July 23, almost immediately after the prorogation of Parliament. The Whigs, more or less loosely in alliance with the Radicals, formed one party; the Tory Protectionists, under the leadership of Lord George Bentinck and Lord Stanley, formed a second; the Tory Free Traders, under Peel, formed a third. Discord therefore reigned throughout the whole established system of party Government, and the dissensions caused by the Free Trade settlement were aggravated by the religious controversy, as to the possibility of giving State aid to Roman Catholic education and worship. Public suspicion had been roused by a declaration which Lord John Russell had made in the House of Commons as to the expediency of establishing formal diplomatic relations with Rome. It was intensified by the Secretary at War, who included in the Army Estimates votes providing means of worship for Roman Catholic soldiers on foreign service. It was

further strengthened by the promised relaxation of the rule, which virtually cut off Roman Catholic schools from all share in the Education Grant. "There was," says Mr. Evelyn Ashley, "little enthusiasm on either side. The Free Trade Question appeared settled; and, though a more vigorous policy was anticipated from a Russell than from a Melbourne Administration, no great organic changes were expected from it. On the other hand, the remnants of the Conservative Party had nothing to hold out beyond vague professions of attachment to an ancient institution."* The result was the return of 337 Whig and Liberal Free Traders, and 318 Conservatives and Protectionists—the Protectionists numbering about one-half of the Conservative return.

Between the Election and the assembling of Parliament the Government was greatly disturbed by the renewed outbreak of outrages in Ireland, and of the commercial panic which had long been imminent. These two events caused Ministers to summon Parliament on the 18th of November. The panic in spring, which we traced to dearth and high prices of food-stuffs, was eased in Midsummer by the fall in prices. This, however, in its turn, produced the second panic in the autumn, for speculators had bought corn in advance at rates far above those which began to rule the market. Then money became "tight." On the 5th of August the Bank raised the rate of discount to $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and Funds fell 2 per cent. in a week—from $88\frac{5}{8}$ to $86\frac{3}{4}$. At the end of August failures to the extent of £3,000,000 were announced, and on the 1st of October the Bank of England refused to make any further advances on Stock. At the end of the week consols fell to $80\frac{1}{2}$. On the 19th of October they were sold for money at 78, and for the account at 79, and Exchequer bills fell as low as 30 per cent. discount. Banking-houses of national importance now began to close their doors, and confidence vanished from the commercial world. On the 25th of October the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, in response to piteous appeals from merchants and bankers all over the country, recommended the directors of the Bank of England "to enlarge the amount of their discounts and advances upon approved security," but that the rate of interest should be 8 per cent., so as "to retain this operation within reasonable limits." They were promised an indemnity if this course led them to infringe the restrictions of the Bank Act. As the offer of advances at 8 per cent. was not tempting, the Bank never required to break the law, which established a fixed ratio between their gold and their securities, but the announcement that the Bank Act was virtually suspended, restored confidence by restoring hope. Lord Campbell seems to indicate in his Autobiography that Ministers themselves were frightened, "there being an apprehension that the dividends may not be paid, and that the Bank of England may stop, and that there may be a pecuniary crash, public and private." All through this crisis Sir Robert Peel's Bank Act was virulently attacked as being one of the causes of the distress. He himself behaved with signal

* Life of Lord Palmerston, Vol. II., p. 41.

generosity. He recognised the necessity for giving way to popular prejudices at a time of panic, and when the Queen informed him at Windsor that Lord John Russell had decided virtually to suspend the Act, he observed that the step was



LORD PALMERSTON.

justifiable in the circumstances, and that he would support the Bill of Indemnity promised to the Bank. That the attacks on Peel were unfair, seems evident from the fact that the suspension of the Act had no practical, though it had a moral, effect on the Money Market. No indemnity was needed, so that,

whatever improvement followed, it could not be due to the banks expanding their issues, or to their system of advancing more generously on securities.

Next came the dismal Irish Question. The Cabinet had, after some controversy, arrived at the conclusion that they must bring in a Coercion Bill for Ireland, although they were fully aware that they exposed themselves to the taunt that they had turned out Sir Robert Peel's Government for proposing to introduce one. But the case was urgent. That crime had increased to an appalling extent in Ireland is indicated by the fact that Sir Robert



QUEEN'S COLLEGE, BELFAST.

(From a Photograph by W. Lawrence, Dublin.)

Peel, resisting a very natural temptation to retaliate on his adversaries, supported the Government and asked the House of Commons to pass the Bill. His generosity is enshrined in one phrase of his speech—"The best reparation that can be made to the last Government will be to assist the present Government in passing this law." The Bill was carried by a majority of 213.

Some of the murders in Ireland at the end of the year were truly of a revolting character. Here is an example. A farmer named St. John, who was done to death near Lisnamrock, in county Tipperary, had a dispute with his younger brother about the possession of a farm. The younger brother seems to have been in the right, and this roused local feeling. On the 16th of December a party of men went at night, and, dragging the elder St. John out of bed, ripped his body open and cut off his head before

his wife's eyes. There was, in fact, an epidemic of crime in the land. Murder was the remedy that was applied to redress all kinds of grievances or wrongs, and everybody went about the ordinary affairs of life armed to the teeth.

What was worse, too, was the hostility of the priesthood to the Government, and one manifestation of it was regarded as particularly offensive by her Majesty. That was the Papal Memorandum condemning the Queen's Colleges. Although Lord John Russell had actually drafted a Bill legalising the renewal of diplomatic relations with Rome, the Pope and the Roman Catholic clergy made but a sorry recompense for his goodwill. The Sacred Congregation denounced the Queen's Colleges—"an ungrateful return," writes Lord Palmerston in a letter to Lord Minto,* which "can only be explained on the supposition that it was extorted by intrigue and false representations made at Rome by McHale, and that the Pope acted ignorantly, and without knowing the mischief he was doing." Lord Clarendon, the Irish Viceroy, thought that good results might follow the visit of a confidential agent from the Vatican to Ireland. But Lord Palmerston, fearing that the Papal emissary would be suborned by Archbishop McHale and the enemies of the Government, objected to such an experiment. In another letter, on the 3rd of December, Lord Palmerston urges Lord Minto to assure the Pope that "in Ireland misconduct is the rule and good conduct the exception in the Catholic priests," and he points to the murder of Major Mahon, which followed a priestly denunciation at the altar, as an illustration of the manner in which the Irish priesthood were instigating crime. He says he cannot consider it prudent to bring in a Bill for Legalising Diplomatic Intercourse with the Court of Rome at a time when there is in Ireland "a deliberate and extensive conspiracy among the priests and peasantry to kill off and drive away all the proprietors of land." Public feeling in England, always easily roused, would have swept away the Ministry in a tempest of wrath if such a measure had been introduced at such a moment. On the other hand, it is only fair to the Pope and Cardinal Ferretti to say that they seemed to be hopelessly ignorant of Irish affairs, and that they assured Lord Minto they utterly disapproved of the political activity of the Irish priesthood.

Two other religious disputes, maintained by the zealots, excited the country. One was waged over the admission of the Jews to Parliament. The other gave rise to the famous Hampden controversy, which is so constantly alluded to in the literature and memoirs of the day.

At the General Election one of the members returned for the City of London was Baron Rothschild, a Jew by race and religion. As such he could not take his seat, for he could not take the Oath of Allegiance on the true faith of a Christian. Lord John Russell, his colleague, submitted to the House

* Life of Lord Palmerston, by the Hon. E. Ashley, Vol. II., p. 46.

of Commons a Resolution declaring that it was expedient to remove all civil disabilities affecting the Jews—in other words, the removal of the phrase “on the faith of a Christian” from the Parliamentary Oath. Lord George Bentinck, Mr. Disraeli, and Mr. Gladstone, supported the Resolution. A Bill founded on it was carried in the Lower House, but rejected in the House of Lords.

On the 20th of December Parliament adjourned.

The Government were decidedly unfortunate during 1847 in their distribution of ecclesiastical patronage. They appointed the Rev. J. P. Lee, Head Master of King Edward’s School, at Birmingham, to the newly-constituted see of Manchester, after he had been publicly charged with drunkenness by a local surgeon, and had never met the accusation. It was inexplicable that Lord John Russell, when informed of the fact, should have refused to cancel or delay the appointment. Between his nomination and his consecration Mr. Lee, however, prosecuted his traducer for libel, and completely and triumphantly vindicated his character.

When the see of Hereford fell vacant Lord John Russell, as if in sheer defiance of the feelings of Churchmen, appointed Dr. Hampden as the new Bishop. Dr. Hampden had been censured for heresy by the academic authorities of Oxford, and deprived, as Regius Professor of Divinity, of authority to grant as a privilege certificates of attendance at his lectures to students for Holy Orders. To designate him as Bishop was taken as a direct insult by the clergy. Hence the Bishop of London, representing the High Churchmen, and the Bishop of Winchester, representing the Low Churchmen, along with thirteen Bishops, protested against the appointment. The Dean of Hereford, Dr. Merewether, threatened to vote against Dr. Hampden’s election by the Chapter. This threat drew from Lord John Russell a curt reply to the effect that he acknowledged receipt of the letter in which the Dean intimated he would violate the law. Dr. Merewether’s action also drew attention to the empty formality of the *congé d’élire*, whereby the Crown permits the Dean and Chapter of a Cathedral to elect the nominee recommended by the Crown as Bishop. Should they refuse they incur the pains and penalties of præmunire—deprivation of benefices, confiscation of property, and imprisonment during the Royal pleasure.

Hampden was a rather dull man, with a ponderous, obscure style,* whose offence lay, first, in advocating the admission of Dissenters into the University, and, secondly, in not only attributing, in his Bampton Lectures, the terminology and phraseology of Christian doctrine to the scholastic philosophy of the Middle Ages, but in further describing that philosophy as “an atmosphere of mist!” He was supposed to be ambiguous on the Atonement, and it had been whispered that Blanco White had “crammed” him for his Bampton

* It was so obscure that Dr. Wilberforce says, playfully, in one of his letters to his brother:—“N.B.—Could we not pass a vote that Hampden should always preach in Hebrew?”—Life of Bishop Wilberforce, Vol. I., p. 93.

Lectures. White was one of the small group of Broad Churchmen at Oriel College, Oxford, whom Newman dreaded, and as he had since become a Socinian, suspicions of Dr. Hampden's heterodoxy were intensified. The Bishop of Oxford, after joining in the hue and cry against Hampden, declined to send him up for trial, on the ground that there was no valid case against him. There is no doubt, however, that when he discovered the Queen had espoused Dr. Hampden's cause, Wilberforce's zeal cooled rapidly. As for Prince Albert, he bombarded Lord John Russell with letters urging him to prosecute Dr. Merewether, who seems to have been far from a disinterested defender of the faith, if it be true, as is asserted, that he memorialised the Queen and Lord Lansdowne to terminate the controversy by appointing him to the see of Hereford in the meantime, and then consoling Dr. Hampden with the promise of the next vacancy! Much importance attached to the opposition which the Bishop of Exeter offered to Hampden. But, according to Mr. Greville, the Bishop of Exeter had, a few years before this strife, called on Hampden at Oxford to express to him the pleasure with which he had read his Bampton Lectures.* Archbishop Longley, who told Lord Aberdeen that he would go to the Tower rather than confirm Hampden's nomination, subsequently begged the Bishop of Oxford to stay proceedings in the interests of the Church.

Lord John Russell, it need hardly be said, obstinately refused to cancel Hampden's nomination. After the Queen had sanctioned his appointment, to annul it would have virtually transferred to the Universities the supreme authority of the Crown over the Episcopate. Preparations were made to resist the confirmation of Dr. Hampden at Bow Church. The only question admitted to argument there was whether the Court was competent to hear objectors summoned by its own apparitor to state their objections before it. On the 11th of January the Vicar-General of Canterbury, Dr. Burnaby, with Sir John Dodson and Dr. Lushington as assessors, decided against the competence of the Court. An application for a *mandamus* to compel the Archbishop to hear objectors was refused by the Queen's Bench—the judges being equally divided. On the 15th, in the House of Lords, Lord Denman defended the decision, and declared that "it was not to be supposed for a moment that the Crown would nominate to the high position of a Bishop an unfit person; and that the law would certainly be in a strange state if it should require an archbishop, before he proceeded to confirm or consecrate a party nominated by the Crown, to call upon all the world to throw scandal upon the nominee." He further said that "the form in the proclamation was a mere form which was never used; that, if used, the prerogative of the Crown would be most seriously interfered with;" and he warned the House against "the fatal consequences of allowing objections to be made to the nominees of the Crown," for "by checking every attempt at such interference the Church was protected from great danger and mischief."

* Journal of the Reign of Queen Victoria, Vol. II., p. 115.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE COURT AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

Lord George Bentinck's Imprudence—French Intrigues in Portugal—England and the Junta—A Vulgar Suspicion—The Duke of Wellington and National Defences—The Duke's Threatened Resignation—The Queen Soothes Him—Famine in the Queen's Kitchen—Royal Hospitalities—The Queen's Country Dance—A German Impostor—Discovery of Chloroform—The Royal Visit to Cambridge—Prince Albert's Installation as Chancellor of the University—Awkward Dons—Anecdotes of the Queen at Cambridge—Royalty and Heraldry—The Visit to Scotland—Highland Loyalty—A Desolate Retreat—Politics and Sport at Ardverikie—A New Departure in Foreign Policy—Lord Minto's Mission—The Queen's Views—Prince Albert's Caution to Lord John Russell—The Queen's Amusements at Ardverikie—A Regretful Adieu—Home Again.

DURING 1847-48, Foreign Affairs chiefly occupied the attention of the Queen and Prince Albert. The annexation of Cracow, long meditated by Metternich, was rendered easy to Austria by the coolness which had sprung up between England and France. It was felt that French and English protests, though presented, must be unavailing, because every one knew neither Power would go to war for the sake of Poland. Mr. Hume brought the incident under the notice of the House of Commons, his proposal being to stop the payments to Russia by Great Britain on account of the Russo-Dutch Loan—in other words, to fine Russia for sanctioning Austria's evil-doing. It was the subject of a debate which would have been tame but for Lord George Bentinck's imprudent eulogium on the three despotic Powers—which vastly displeased his Party, and as Lord Palmerston, in a letter to Lord Normanby, said, extinguished him as a candidate for office.* Hume's motion was not pressed to a division.

French influence had been at work in Portugal to estrange the Queen from her English alliance. The dynastic connection between the Houses of Coburg and Braganza rendered Portuguese affairs intensely interesting to Queen Victoria at this time. The King Consort of Portugal—Prince Ferdinand, son of the younger brother of the reigning Duke of Coburg—had, it was rumoured, quarrelled with the Queen, who was tempted to carry out in her dominions the arbitrary policy of the Bourbons. The people rebelled; and in view of a possible Franco-Spanish intervention, England, not uninfluenced by the views of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, stepped in between the Portuguese Sovereign and her people. English intervention was at the outset purely diplomatic. It was limited to the arrangement of a compromise between the contending parties. Ultimately our diplomacy was successful; but the proposals of the English Envoy were finally rejected by the Portuguese Junta, and a Protocol was

* Bulwer's Life of Lord Palmerston, Vol. III., p. 388.

drawn up with Portugal, Spain, and France, for the purpose of bringing the Junta to submission. The General Election was now impending in England, and it was feared that on a motion in the House of Commons, censuring the Government for interfering to coerce the Junta, a combination of Protectionists and Radicals with Lord Palmerston's enemies would defeat the Government. Sir Robert Peel held some anxious conferences with Prince Albert on the subject; and the Queen was afraid lest a vulgar suspicion might get abroad that the policy of her Government had been dominated, not by British but by Coburg interests. Luckily, no serious coercion was needed, and the Junta finally submitted on the 30th of June.

It was on the 11th of June that Mr. Joseph Hume brought forward his motion attacking the Portuguese policy of the Government. The debate was fierce and bitter. Peel, who spoke eloquently on the side of the Ministry, privately warned Prince Albert that Mr. Hume might carry his motion. Lord John Russell wrote to the Queen, saying she must be prepared to receive his resignation by the end of the week; and in the House of Lords also the attack was led by Lord Stanley, with characteristic impetuosity. Naturally, then, everybody was amazed when, after three days' furious wrangling, the debate ended in a count-out in the House of Commons, and the defeat of Lord Stanley in the House of Lords by a majority of twenty. This ridiculous result was due to some misunderstanding between Mr. Hume and Lord George Bentinck, who permitted the "count-out," and it led to endless recriminations. On the 5th of July, Mr. Bernal Osborne brought Portuguese affairs before Parliament once more; and then Lord Palmerston, who had not spoken in the three days' debate, explained his policy. His object, he said, was neither to serve the Portuguese Crown nor oppress the Portuguese nation. He found Portugal a prey to wasting anarchy. But as it was most important that Portugal should be a strong ally of England in maintaining the balance of power, he had felt justified in interfering between the Queen and her people, in order to gain for the latter the constitutional securities which by the advice of bad Councillors her Majesty had suspended. In bringing the war to a peaceful termination, in transferring the struggle from the field of battle to the arena of Parliamentary debate, the Government seems to have fairly earned, if it did not freely receive, the thanks both of England and Portugal.

The dispute between France and England over the Spanish marriages, the personal quarrel between Lord Normanby, the English Ambassador at Paris, and M. Guizot, and the deep distrust of Lord Palmerston, which poisoned the mind of Louis Philippe, bore bad fruits. Lord Normanby allied himself more closely than ever with M. Thiers and the leaders of the Opposition in the French Chambers, who harried the Government with their attacks. M. Guizot began to lean for support on the Northern Powers, and he cultivated the fatal friendship of Metternich. His policy was thus one under which revolution naturally ripened. The unsatisfactory state of our

foreign relations rendered the Duke of Wellington most anxious about the defence of the country; in fact, he was, says Charles Greville, "haunted" by it night and day. Lord Clarendon and Lord Palmerston* were with the Duke. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was against him; as for Lord John Russell, he was neutral.

In January, 1848, the Duke of Wellington, however, startled the country by a letter which he had addressed to General Sir John Burgoyne early in 1847 on the unfortified state of England. At that moment, he averred, the fleet was the only defence the nation possessed. He doubted if 5,000 men of all arms could be sent into the field, unless we left those on duty, including the Royal Guards, without any reliefs whatever. He pleaded for the organisation of a militia force at least 150,000 strong, and for strengthening the defences of the South Coast from the North Foreland to Portsmouth. This letter was a private one. Lady Burgoyne and her daughters, however, had distributed copies of it among their friends, and one Pigou, "a meddling zealot," says Mr. Greville, "who does nothing but read Blue Books and write letters to the *Times*," got hold of a copy and printed it in the newspapers, much to the annoyance of the Duke and Lord John Russell. The Duke of Wellington all through the latter half of the year had indeed given the Ministry and the Queen some uneasiness, and this might have had serious consequences, but for the fine tact and delicate social diplomacy of her Majesty. Enfeebled by age and anxious as to the defences of the country, which the Government persisted in neglecting, the "Great Captain" querulously threatened to resign—a step which the Queen dreaded because she considered that it would greatly reduce public confidence in the Government. A statue in the worst possible taste had been put up on the archway opposite Apsley House—the first equestrian statue, indeed, ever erected in England to a subject. It was put there only provisionally, but the Duke held that to take it down would be an insult to him, and this further strengthened his resolution to retire. The Queen, however, was "excessively kind to him," and her winning courtesies soothed the irritated veteran. "On Monday," says Mr. Greville, writing on the 19th of June, "his granddaughter was christened at the Palace, and the Queen dined with him in the evening. She had written him a very pretty letter, expressing her wish to be godmother to the child, saying that she wished her to be called Victoria, which name was so peculiarly appropriate to a granddaughter of his." After that the country was no longer disturbed by rumours of the Duke's impending resignation.

Of Court life outside the sphere of politics, in this year of distress, we gain some interesting glimpses in the Memoirs and Diaries of the period. In February wheat was selling at 102 shillings a quarter, and in May the Queen herself

* A strong Memorandum by Lord Palmerston on the National Defences, December, 1846, is given *in extenso* in Lord Dalling's Life of Lord Palmerston, Vol. III., p. 390.

says she had been obliged to limit the allowance of bread to every one in the Palace to one pound a day, "and only secondary flour to be used in the Royal kitchen." Still a generous but not ostentatious hospitality was dispensed by her Majesty all through this dismal season. The Baroness Bunsen says, in her Diary, on the 1st of March, 1847:—"We dined at Buckingham Palace

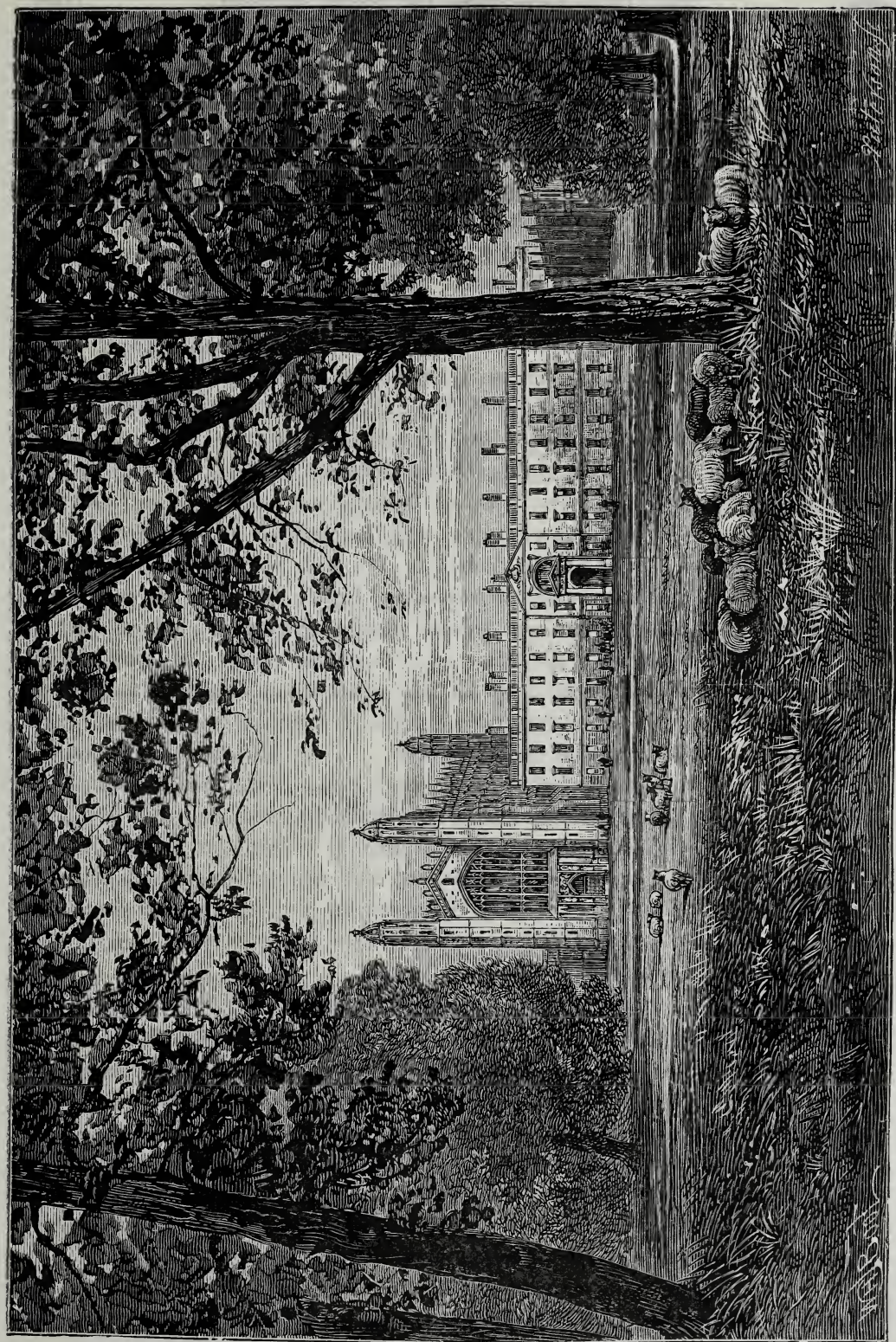


PRINCE METTERNICH.

on Monday, where there was a ball in the evening—that is, a small dancing party, only Lady Rosebery and the Ladies Primrose coming in the evening, in addition to those at dinner. The Queen danced with her usual spirit and activity, and that obliged other people to do their best, and thus the ball was a pretty sight, inspirited by excellent music."

Another description of a Royal dinner-party at this time is given by Lord Campbell, in his Autobiography.* Writing to his brother, Sir George

* Vol. II., p. 220.



KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE FROM THE "BACKS."

Campbell, on the 22nd of March, 1847, he gives us a bright glimpse of Palace life. "You will see," he says, "by the *Court Circular* that Mary and Loo and I dined at the Palace on Saturday. The invitation only came on Friday, and we were engaged to dine with Sir John Hobhouse. There is not much to tell to gratify your curiosity. On our arrival a little before eight, we were shown into the picture gallery, where the company assembled. Burnes, who acted as Master of the Ceremonies, arranged what gentleman should take what lady. He said, 'Dinner is ordered to be on the table at ten minutes past eight, but I bet you the Queen will not be here till twenty to twenty-five minutes after. She always thinks she can dress in ten minutes, but she takes about double the time.' True enough, it was nearly twenty-five minutes after eight before she appeared. She shook hands with the ladies, bowed to the gentlemen, and proceeded to the *salle à manger*. I had to take in Lady Emily de Burgh, and was third on her Majesty's right—Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar and my partner being between us. The greatest delicacy we had was some very nice-oatcake. There was a Highland piper standing behind her Majesty's chair, but he did not play as at 'State dinners.' We had likewise some Edinburgh ale. The Queen and the ladies withdrawing, Prince Albert came over to her side of the table, and we remained behind about a quarter of an hour; but we rose within the hour from the time of our sitting down. A snuff-box was twice carried round and offered to all the gentlemen; Prince Albert, to my surprise, took a pinch. On returning to the gallery we had tea and coffee. The Queen then came up and talked to me. . . . She does the honours of her palace with infinite sweetness and grace—and considering what she is, both in public and domestic life, I do not think she is sufficiently loved and respected. Prince Albert took me to task for my impatience to get into the new House of Lords, but I think I pacified him complimenting his taste. A dance followed. The Queen chiefly delighted in a romping sort of country dance called the *Tempête*. She withdrew a little before twelve, and we went off to Lady Palmerston's."

Again, writing on the eventful day when the Royal Household had been put on short rations, the Baroness Bunsen, in a letter to her mother, says:—"Last night we were asked to the Queen Dowager's, who had invited a small party, at which the Queen was present and the Duchess of Gloucester. The object was to give a German named Löwe, who had come with prodigious recommendations from Coburg, opportunity of showing his musical talent, and it turned out that he had none to show"*—not by any means the first imported adventurer who has tried to take advantage of the Queen's good nature, and her sympathy for Art.

The great scientific event of the year was a discovery in which the Queen not only took a deep personal interest, but the application of which she

* Life and Letters of Baroness Bunsen, Vol. II., p. 8.

subsequently used her influence to popularise. It was the substitution of the use of chloroform for ether as an anæsthetic agent in operative surgery. Chloroform was first introduced into Great Britain by Dr. James Young Simpson, Professor of Midwifery in the University of Edinburgh, and he claimed for it several advantages over ether. A smaller quantity produced unconsciousness. It acted more rapidly, and was less evanescent than ether. It was alleged to be safer, though this is still a matter of doubt. The old masters of surgery used to consider a surgical operation the opprobrium of their art. By rendering all operations painless, Simpson did not remove this opprobrium, though he reduced it to a minimum.

Two great events in the domestic life of the Court in 1847 were the visit to Cambridge and the visit to Scotland, which took place after Parliament was dissolved. Baron Stockmar was not the only quiet observer who had noticed that Prince Albert had "made great strides lately." Learned men in England had come to recognise in the thoughtful and scholarly young Prince a choice and kindred spirit. On the 12th of February, 1847, his Royal Highness was deeply gratified to receive from Dr. Whewell, the Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, a letter asking permission to nominate him for the vacant Chancellorship of the University. Acting quite independently of Dr. Whewell, Lord Lansdowne sent a similar request, and Mr. Anson, Prince Albert's secretary, received a communication from the Bishop of London (Blomfield), assuring him that a great many of the leading members of the University were deeply interested in the election of his Royal Highness, and would consider his acceptance of office alike honourable and advantageous to Cambridge. The Queen was touched with these expressions of kindly feeling, for if there had ever been a shadow over her happiness, it had been due to a lurking suspicion that her husband was not fairly appreciated by the people, among whom for her sake he had elected to work out a career of self-effacement. Here, at last, it seemed to her Majesty, there was an indication that her husband's high qualities were meeting with their just reward. The offer of the Chancellorship of Cambridge she regarded as an honour conferred on the Prince for his own sake rather than for hers—as the first mark of distinction won by him in England, outside the sphere and range of her influence.

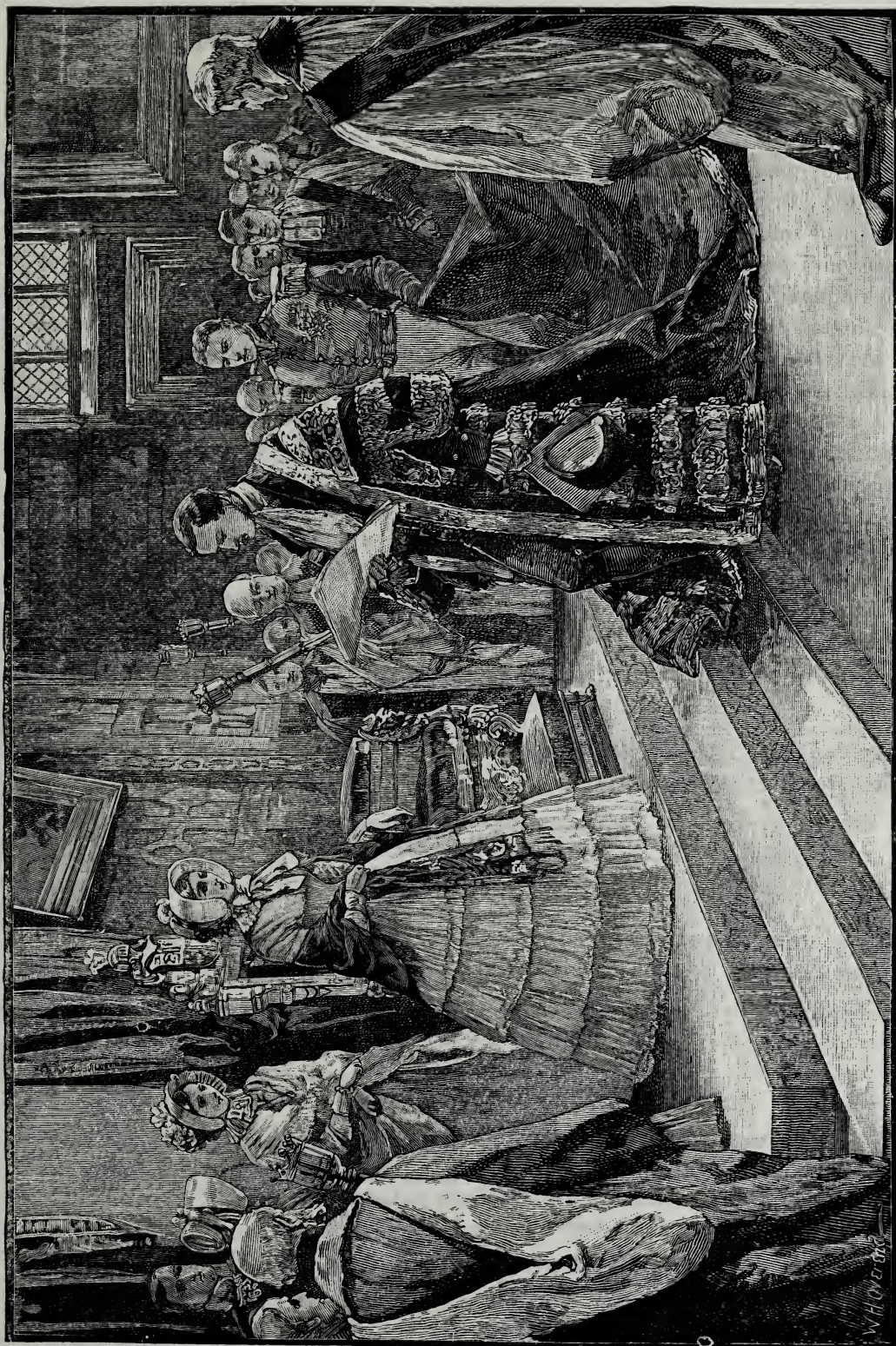
This feeling was strengthened when, on the 18th of February, there arrived at Buckingham Palace an address, signed by all the most distinguished resident members of the University, urging the Prince to accept nomination. But in Cambridge, as elsewhere, little local jealousies often rob great movements of some of their grace and sweetness. St. John's, ever envious of Trinity, thought the University should have a Chancellor of its choosing, and had accordingly put Lord Powis in nomination. The Prince, not quite estimating these petty academic rivalries at their true value, shrank from the competition, and ordered his name to be withdrawn. Dr. Whewell

and his supporters, however, disregarded this request, and insisted on going to the poll against the Prince's wishes, which put them at a signal disadvantage. The contest was keen—perhaps one might even say a trifle acrimonious—but it ended in the triumph of the Prince, whose supporters defeated Lord Powis by a vote of 953 to 837. Nineteen out of thirty-seven wranglers, and sixteen out of twenty-four professors, voted for the Prince. The resident vote was three to one in his favour, so that, as is usual in



ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

University elections, the strength of the "Marplots" lay in the rural electorate. Still, the Prince had scruples about accepting the office. His candidature had been carried on against his express desire, and he harped on the idea that victory, without some approach to unanimity, could only give rise to discord in the University. His friends, however, urged him to take office, and they had a powerful ally in the Queen. As Sir R. Peel said at the time, "to decline the office would give a triumph to the partisans of Lord Powis—who would feel no gratitude for the concession—and would cause deep mortification and disappointment to all those who voted for the Prince, and of whom the greater number cannot be held responsible for the nomination of the Prince against his declared wishes." The smallness of the majority was, of course,



THE PRINCE-CHANCELLOR OF CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESENTING AN ADDRESS TO THE QUEEN. (See p. 311.)

largely due to the fact that the Trinity party had pressed the Prince's candidature after he had publicly withdrawn. They were, in fact, asking electors to vote for a candidate whose acceptance of office if elected was doubtful. On the other hand, the Prince could not force his partisans to stop proceedings, except by publicly declaring that in no circumstances would he accept, even if chosen, the Chancellorship of the University, which would have been justly construed into an insult to Cambridge. Ultimately the Prince agreed to take office, and on the 25th of March the ceremony of inauguration took place at Buckingham Palace, where the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Philpott, at the head of an imposing academic deputation, presented the Prince with the Letters Patent of his office. The venerable Laureate, Wordsworth, himself a Cambridge man, kindly responded to a suggestion that he should write the Installation Ode, and, as he observed in a letter to Colonel Phipps, "retouch a harp, which I will not say with Tasso, oppressed by misfortunes and years, has been hung up upon a cypress, but which has, however, been for some time laid aside." That he excluded the Ode from his collected works indicates that he felt the ancient founts of inspiration had almost run dry, and yet there are many passages of stately beauty in the poem. It begins by referring to the rescue of Europe from the grasp of Napoleon, and to the wail of sorrow that resounded through England when the Princess Charlotte died:—

"Flower and bud together fall—
A nation's hopes lie crushed in Claremont's desolate hall."

Then a noble strophe announces the birth of the Princess Victoria, and celebrates her happy destiny:—

Love, the treasure worth possessing
More than all the world beside;
This shall be her dearest blessing,
Oft to Royal heads denied."

But the strength and resonance of the Ode chiefly lie in the passages addressed to the Prince in relation to his duties:—

"Albert, in thy race we cherish
A nation's strength that will not perish
While England's sceptred line
True to the King of Kings is found;
Like that wise ancestor of thine
Who threw the Saxon shield o'er Luther's life,
When first above the yells of bigot strife
The trumpet of the Living Word
Assumed a voice of deep portentous sound,
From gladdened Elbe to startled Tiber heard."

Brilliant sunshine gilded those joyful July days when the Queen and her husband set out with a gay and gladsome party for the ceremony of Installation. "The great Railway King, Mr. Hudson himself," writes the Queen in her Diary, took charge of their train. But perhaps the freshest and brightest

account of the journey, and of the proceedings all through, is that of the Baroness Bunsen, a gifted lady who accompanied the Royal party, and who was an eye-witness of what occurred. In a letter to her mother, under date the 8th of July, 1847, she says:—"On Monday morning we were at the station before nine, just before Prince Waldemar, the Duke of Saxe-Weimar, and Prince of Oldenburg arrived, for whom the Queen had added a special train, and one of those carriages called Royal, like a long omnibus, just holding the Princes, their gentlemen aides-de-camp, Bishop Stanley, and Sir George Grey, Prince Löwenstein, and ourselves. The station was a curious spectacle, as usual—all ranks and materials of human society hurrying and jostling or standing together. Our little Aaron Elphick, advanced from a college at Hurstmonceux to be knife-cleaner at Oak Hill, from thence brought to London last year, grown and dressed into a sort of embryo footman, and lent to Prince Löwenstein for the journey to Cambridge, stood guarding the Prince's portmanteau, whilst close by, talking across Aaron, stood three Princes and a Bishop. As we shot along, every station and bridge and resting-place and spot of shade was peopled with eager faces watching for the Queen, and decorated with flowers; but the largest and the brightest, and the gayest and most excited assemblage, was at the Cambridge Station itself, and from thence along the streets to Trinity College the degree of ornament and crowd and excitement was always increasing. I think I never saw so many children before in one morning, and I felt so much moved at the spectacle of such a mass of life collected together and animated by one feeling, and that a joyous one, that I was at a loss to conceive 'how any woman's sides can bear the beating of so strong a throb' as must attend the consciousness of being the object of all that excitement and the centre of attraction for all those eyes; but the Queen has Royal strength of nerve. We met the well-fed magistrates and yeomanry going to await the Queen, as they desired to fetch her from the station, and walk in procession before her into the town. We saw her entrance into Trinity College as we stood at the window of the Lodge, and the academic crowd, in picturesque dresses, were as loud and rejoicing as any mob could have been. Soon after I went with Mrs. Whewell, Lady Hardwicke, and Lady Monteagle, to take our places in the yet vacant Great Hall of Trinity, where the Queen came to receive the Chancellor's address, and a few minutes after she had placed herself on the Throne (*i.e.*, arm-chair under a canopy at the raised extremity of the Hall). Prince Albert, as Chancellor, entered from the opposite end, in a beautiful dress of black and gold, with a long train held up, made a graceful bow, and read an address, to which she read an answer with a peculiar emphasis, uttering *approbation* of the choice of a Chancellor made by Cambridge! Both kept their countenances admirably, and she only smiled upon the Prince at the close, when all was over, and she had let all the heads of houses kiss her hand, which they did with exquisite variety of awkwardness, all but one or two. Afterwards, the Queen dined with the Vice-Chancellor in

the hall of a small college, where but comparatively few could be admitted. My husband was among the invited, but not myself, and I was very glad to dine with Mrs. Whewell, Lady Monteagle, and three of their suite—Colonel Phipps, Mr. Anson, and Meyer. Later in the evening I enjoyed a walk in the beautiful garden belonging to the Lodge, where flowers, planted and cared for



DR. WHEWELL.

in the best manner, combine with fine trees and picturesque architecture. The Queen went to a concert, contrived as an extra opportunity of showing her to the public. On Tuesday morning all were up early to breakfast at nine (but I had crept into the garden and admired the abundance of roses long before that), to be ready before ten at the distribution of prizes and performance of the Installation Ode in the Senate House. The English prize-poem, by a Mr. Day, on Sir Thomas More, had really merit besides the merit of the subject. The Installation Ode I thought quite affecting, because the

selection of striking points is founded on fact, and all exaggeration and *humbug* were avoided Then the Queen dined in the Great Hall of Trinity, and splendid did the Great Hall look—330 people at various tables In the afternoon we had all been at luncheon at Downing College, and enjoyed dancing in a refreshing shade, and the spectacle of cheerful crowds in brilliant sunshine. The Queen came thither and walked round to see the Horticultural Show, and to show herself and the Chancellor.



THE QUEEN IN THE WOODWARDIAN MUSEUM. (See p. 315.)

After this was the real dinner, the Queen and her immediate suite at a table across the raised end of the Hall, all the rest at tables lengthways. At the Queen's table the names were put on places, and anxious was the moment before one could find one's place. I was directed by Lord Spencer to take one between him and the Duke of Buccleuch, and found myself in very agreeable neighbourhood.

"Yesterday morning I went with the Duchess of Sutherland and Lady Desart through the Library, King's Chapel, Clare Hall, and the beautiful avenue and gardens—with combinations of trees, architecture, green turf, flowers, and water—which, under such a sun and sky as we had, could nowhere be finer. The Duchess was conducted by Dr. Whewell, Lady Desart by Lord Abercorn, and my honoured self by *Dr. Meyer in uniform* (as all had been attending the

Chancellor's levee in the morning), and we passed among the admiring crowd who followed us at a respectful distance, for the hero, Sir Harry Smith, as Lord Fortescue said, was taken for the Duke of Wellington. Till twelve we walked, and at one the Queen set out, through the Cloisters, and Hall and Library of Trinity College, to pass through the gardens and avenues, which had been connected for the occasion, by a temporary bridge over the river, with those of St. John's, and we followed her, thus having the best opportunity of seeing everything, and in particular the joyous crowd that grouped among the noble trees. Then the Queen sat down to luncheon in a tent, and we were placed at her table. The only other piece of diplomacy was Van de Weyer; but Madame Van de W. did not come, being unable to undertake the fatigue. The Queen returned by Trinity Lodge, and left for good at three, and as soon as we could afterwards we drove away with Prince Waldemar. I could still tell much of Cambridge, of the charms of its trim gardens, and of how well the Queen looked, and how pleased, and how well she was dressed, and how perfect in grace and movements."

Another little vignette of the stately academic pageant, in which the Queen shone as a sweet and charming figure, is rapidly sketched by another eyewitness. Bishop Wilberforce, writing to Miss Noel, July 5th, 1847,* says:—

"The Cambridge scene was very interesting. There was such a burst of loyalty, and it so told on the Queen and the Prince. C. would not there have thought that he looked cold. It was quite clear that they both felt it was something new; that he had earned, and not she given, a true English honour; and so he looked so pleased and she so triumphant. There were also some pretty interludes—when he presented the address and she beamed upon him, and once half smiled, and then covered the smile with a gentle dignity, and then she said, in her clear, musical voice, 'The choice which the University has made of its Chancellor has my most entire approbation.'"

The Royal lady's voice may have been clear and distinct, but, as a matter of fact, she was thrilled with nervous excitement, quite unusual to her, and evidently due to the fulness of her heart in sharing her husband's first great personal triumph over English prejudices. "I cannot say," the Queen records in her Diary, "how it agitated and embarrassed me to receive this address, and hear it read by my beloved Albert, who walked in at the head of the University, and who looked dear and beautiful in his robes, which were carried by Colonel Phipps and Colonel Seymour. Albert went through it all admirably—almost absurd, however, as it was for us." And the same thought shines through the last entry which the Queen makes with reference to the event. "We had spent," she writes in her Diary, "a truly pleasant and most interesting time. To see my Albert honoured and esteemed, as he deserves, gives me the deepest satisfaction. . . . We reached Buckingham Palace at half-past four, and

* Life of Bishop Wilberforce, Vol. I., p. 398.

found the children all well. I felt tired and *étourdie*. We walked a little in the garden, then dined alone, and spent a dear, peaceful, happy evening."

Here, perhaps, it may be permissible to say that Cambridge has ever been endeared to her Majesty by reason of many pleasant associations of her early married life which gather round it. As has been stated in a previous Chapter, it was at Cambridge in October, 1843, that Prince Albert first gained any insight into the English University system, during a visit which he and the Queen paid, quite informally, to Dr. Whewell, the Master of Trinity.* They had a brilliant reception on that occasion, some two thousand horsemen accompanying them with shouts of welcome. The Royal pair had Whewell for a host and a cicerone, and Prince Albert, in a letter to Baron Stockmar, gives a glowing account of the enthusiasm with which he was received. Many good stories were told of the visit in the University after they left. Professor Sedgwick, the geologist, held some interesting conversation with the Prince in the Woodwardian Museum, and was quite surprised to find that he was a geologist of sound culture, who took much pleasure in teaching the Queen all he knew about the monsters of the Old World, whose history seemed greatly to interest her. The Professor was, however, non-plussed when her Majesty asked him where the head of his pet *Ichthyosaurus*, which he was unpacking, came from, and was fain to cover his ignorance for the moment by saying, much to her Majesty's amusement, that doubtless "it came as a delegate from the monsters of the lower world to greet her Majesty on her arrival at the University."†

It was on this occasion that the Queen made the acquaintance of her rugged but kindly host—the Master of Trinity—a rough diamond who had raised himself by sheer ability from the humble position of a sizar, to be virtually the intellectual head of the University. "W. and I," writes Mrs. Whewell to her mother,‡ "received commands to dine with the Queen at eight o'clock; hasty notices were sent out to those whom she would receive in the evening. At dinner, the Queen, and, still more, the Prince, asked my husband questions about the University and College, to which he gave such full answers, and they seemed to take so much interest in hearing them, that it quite took off the disagreeable effect of a Royal categorical conversation. . . . Certainly the Queen and Prince seemed to like it. After dinner, in the drawing-room, the Queen asked me if these were prints which lay on the table. I had taken care to place some interesting ones there, for the chance of her looking at them. The book she took most notice of was an old book by Sir Edward Stanhope, of coats-of-arms of our founders and benefactors, which we had got out of the Muniment Room. I pointed out some of the changes—Henry VIII.'s, for instance, with the rouge dragon of Cadwallader,

* It is supposed to be the special prerogative of Trinity to receive Royal visitors to Cambridge.

† Martin's Life of the Prince Consort, Chap. X.

‡ Whewell's Memoirs.

the last of the Britons, for a supporter; James I.'s, with the unicorn. When Prince Albert came up-stairs she pointed it out to him. He seemed a very good herald, and told me several foreign coats that had quite puzzled me, and also Lord and Lady Maybrooke, who are great heralds." On going away the Queen gave Mrs. Whewell a pretty bracelet, "saying she wished to give it to me with her own hands. . . . She spoke very kindly indeed, and Prince Albert came and said that the only thing he regretted was the



FALMOUTH HARBOUR.

shortness of the visit. She proceeded to the door; the Master was on the stairs. We accompanied them, walking as much backwards as we could." This part of the etiquette seems to have severely exercised the kindly Cambridge dons, unused as they were to Court ceremonial. Sedgwick says, for example, with reference to the Royal visit to the Woodwardian Museum, "I will only add that I went through every kind of backward movement to the admiration of all beholders, only having once trodden on the hinder part of my cassock, and never once having fallen during my retrogradations before the face of the Queen. In short, had I been a king-crab I could not have walked backwards better." Of the Queen the brusque old Master of Trinity

himself wrote:—"She was very kind in all her expressions to us; told Cordelia that everything in her apartments 'was so nice and so comfortable,' and at parting gave her a very pretty bracelet. The Prince was very agreeable, intelligent, and conversible, seemed much interested with all he saw, and talked a good deal about his German University, Bonn. . . . At dinner I was opposite the Queen, who talked easily and cheerfully. I had also a good deal of occasion to talk to her, in showing her the lions of Cambridge,



THE ROYAL VISIT TO FINGAL'S CAVE. (See p. 319)

which she ran over very rapidly. It is no small matter to provide for the Queen's reception, even as we did. We had about forty servants of the Queen in the house, besides a dozen men belonging to the stable department who were in the town. The Queen's coachman is reported to have said that he had taken her Majesty to many places, but never to anywhere where she was so well received, or *where the ale was so good.*"

These little reminiscences of the Queen's early life are not, when rightly regarded, altogether trivial. They give us a delightful picture of a nature doubly royal—royal not merely by birth, but by what birth can never give—the easy affability of manner, the unaffected determination to please and be pleased, the true politeness and tender graces of demeanour which spring

from the natural sunshine of the heart, and before which the pedantries of etiquette seem ghastly unrealities. Nothing can illustrate her Majesty's simple geniality of heart better than a story about her visit to Cambridge, which it may be remarked Whewell does *not* tell. He was no courtier, as all the world knew, and he treated the Queen in the old-fashioned hospitable manner which the middle-class gentry in England assume towards their guests. The morning after her arrival he accordingly came down bustling into the room quite unceremoniously, and, to the horror of the Lords and Ladies in waiting, ignoring all Court etiquette, he walked up quite coolly and saluted her with brusque frankness as follows:—"Good-morning, your Majesty! How d'ye do? Hope your Majesty slept well. Fine morning, isn't it?" to which the Queen, to the astonishment of her suite, returned an equally cordial answer, wreathed in the sweetest of smiles.

The visit to Scotland was arranged in August, after the General Election brought peace for a time into the political world. On the 11th of August the Royal party left Osborne in the Royal yacht; "our party," says Prince Albert, "being composed of Victoria and myself, the two eldest children, with Miss Hildyard, Charles (Prince of Leiningen), the Duke and Duchess of Norfolk, Lady Jocelyn, General Wemyss, and Sir James Clark." On the 12th they succeeded, in spite of the mist, in getting well out towards the Atlantic, but though the Prince, thanks to the advice of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, whose panacea for sea-sickness was a glass of port wine, stood the voyage well, some of the party were so sea-sick that they had to abandon the yacht at Falmouth. On the 13th they paid a hazardous visit to "the dogs of Scilly"—as one of the party observed to the Prince, "That is a very good thing over; I should think you will never care to see them again;" and on the 14th, under brighter skies and over smoother seas, they neared the Welsh coast, making land at Milford Haven, and anchoring under the shadow of its red cliffs. The Prince paid a flying visit to Pembroke Dockyard and Castle, but the Queen sat on deck sketching, as was often her favourite custom in these cruises to Scotland. On the 15th they were opposite the Isle of Anglesea, gazing with silent rapture on the hoary head of Snowdon rising from the midst of a sea of surrounding verdure. The *Victoria and Albert* was then sent to Holyhead, the Royal party proceeding in the *Fairy* through the Menai Straits, and passing the old Keep of Carnarvon, and Plas Newydd, and many other places recalling to the mind of the Queen touching reminiscences of a Welsh tour which, when Princess Victoria, she had made with her mother. On the 16th they ran into Douglas Bay and Ramsey Harbour in the Isle of Man, where, remarks Prince Albert in a letter to Stockmar, the good people "put in their paper that I led the Prince Regent (the little Prince of Wales) by the hand." "Usually," he adds humorously, "one has a Regent for an infant; but in Man it seems precisely the reverse." On the 17th they were tossing in wonderment before the beetling cliffs of Ailsa Craig, their ears

deafened by the screams of the sea-birds that wheeled and whirled in clouds between them and the sun; but as the creatures kept out of range, "with almost mathematical precision," says Prince Albert mournfully, not one fell to his gun. The noble outlines of the Isle of Arran then broke on their view, and they sped on through Lamlash and Brodick Bays, past the Isle of Bute, past the Cumbraes, and up the romantic Firth of Clyde, with its great sea fiords eating their way northwards into the heart of the Highlands, to Greenock, where, embarking in the *Fairy*, they flew along to Dumbarton, "pursued in the literal sense by upwards of forty steamers." The castle on the old rock here was explored, and the party then returned to Rothesay Bay, where the people were delighted to see their young Duke (the Prince of Wales). On the 18th they ran through the far-famed Kyles of Bute, on to Inverary, where an old-fashioned Highland welcome awaited them from the Duke and Duchess of Argyll, and a large family party of old friends. "Outside," writes the Queen, "stood the Marquess of Lorne, just two years old, a dear, white, fat, fair little fellow, with reddish hair, but very delicate features, like both his mother and father; he is such a merry, independent little child. He had a black velvet dress and jacket with a sporran, scarf, and Highland bonnet." There was luncheon in the castle, stalwart clansmen in their tartans lining the fine feudal hall with halberts in their hands.

The Royal yacht then glided down Loch Fyne, whose waters sparkled in the mellow sunshine, the Queen watching, with keen enjoyment, the long swathes of golden light that fell athwart the mighty shoulders of the mountains. Lochgilphead, the Sound of Jura, and Staffa were all reached in turn, and, the weather being fine, they ran into Fingal's Cave in the Royal barge, with the Royal standard floating at the stern. "On me," observes Prince Albert, "the cave produced a most romantic impression, on the ladies a very eerie and uncomfortable one." The Queen writes:—"At three we anchored close before Staffa, and immediately got into the barge, with Charles, the children, and the rest of our people, and rowed towards the cave. As we rounded the point, the wonderful basaltic formation came into sight. . . . It (the cave) looked almost awful as we entered, and the barge heaved up and down on the swell of the sea. . . . It was the first time the British standard, with a Queen of Great Britain and her husband and children, had ever entered Fingal's Cave." Next day rain confined the Queen to her cabin, but in the afternoon she was able to come on deck and see Loch Linnhe, Loch Eil, and the entrance to Loch Leven. At Fort William the yacht anchored, and Prince Albert, with the Prince of Leiningen, went up the grim and gloomy Pass of Glencoe, haunted by the wraiths of the massacred Macdonalds.

When they returned the Queen landed from the yacht. In a drenching Scotch mist she was enthusiastically welcomed by a vast gathering of clansmen in characteristic tartans, and wearing their tribal badges, who turned out to

receive her. By a rough and dreary road the Royal tourists drove through the mist to their destination—the lonely shooting-lodge of Ardverikie, by the wildly-beautiful but desolate shores of Loch Laggan. Ardverikie belonged to Lord Henry Bentinck, but at the time of the Queen's visit it was let to Lord Abercorn: its great charm lay in its being, as the Prince said, a most "un-come-at-able" place, and here the Royal family, despite the atrocious weather, enjoyed a pleasant time of freedom and peace. Lord Grey and Lord Palmerston visited them in turn, and with both the Prince talked gravely on foreign politics—with the latter more especially, on impending troubles in Italy.

It was on the 28th of August that the Queen and Prince Albert were startled by a letter from Lord John Russell, intimating that Lord Palmerston and he were desirous of sending Lord Minto to Italy as an unofficial envoy to strengthen and encourage Pope Pius IX. in his reforming policy. This step, one may say in passing, was the one at which Mr. Disraeli jeered when he ridiculed the Whigs for sending their emissary to teach politics to the countrymen of Machiavelli. Her Majesty and her husband were of opinion that great caution would be necessary in arranging this mission, as it was illegal for the English Government to hold direct diplomatic intercourse with the Vatican; but they fully agreed that the time had come for England to adopt an independent line in foreign policy. "England's mission," wrote the Prince to Lord John Russell, "is to put herself at the head of the diffusion of civilisation and the attainment of liberty," and they felt that it was no longer possible to adopt a purely passive attitude in the growing contest between Absolutism, as represented by Austria, and the forces of Liberalism which were beginning to strain the fetters in which the policy of Metternich confined them. But England, in the opinion of the Queen and her husband, was to wisely act the part of a sympathetic guide, and not push any nation beyond its own march, nor "impose on any nation what that nation does not itself produce." But, says the Prince, boldly, "let her declare herself the protector and friend of all States engaged in progress, and let them acquire that confidence in England that she will, if necessary, defend them at her own risk." Long and anxiously had these matters been debated between the Queen, her husband, and Lord Palmerston, who was with them. It was, however, agreed that on these lines Lord Minto's instructions should be drawn up, and that similar instructions should be sent to all our diplomatic agents abroad for their guidance. The main idea of the new departure in foreign policy, according to the Prince, was that, whilst England should foster the cause of constitutional progress abroad, there must be no "pressing upon any State an advance which is not the result of its own impulse." In carrying out this policy Lord Palmerston contrived to embroil England with every great Power in Europe. That, however, does not prove that the policy was bad. It merely shows that Lord Palmerston's methods of dealing with foreign Governments were deficient alike in tact and taste—that his diplomacy, in fact, was

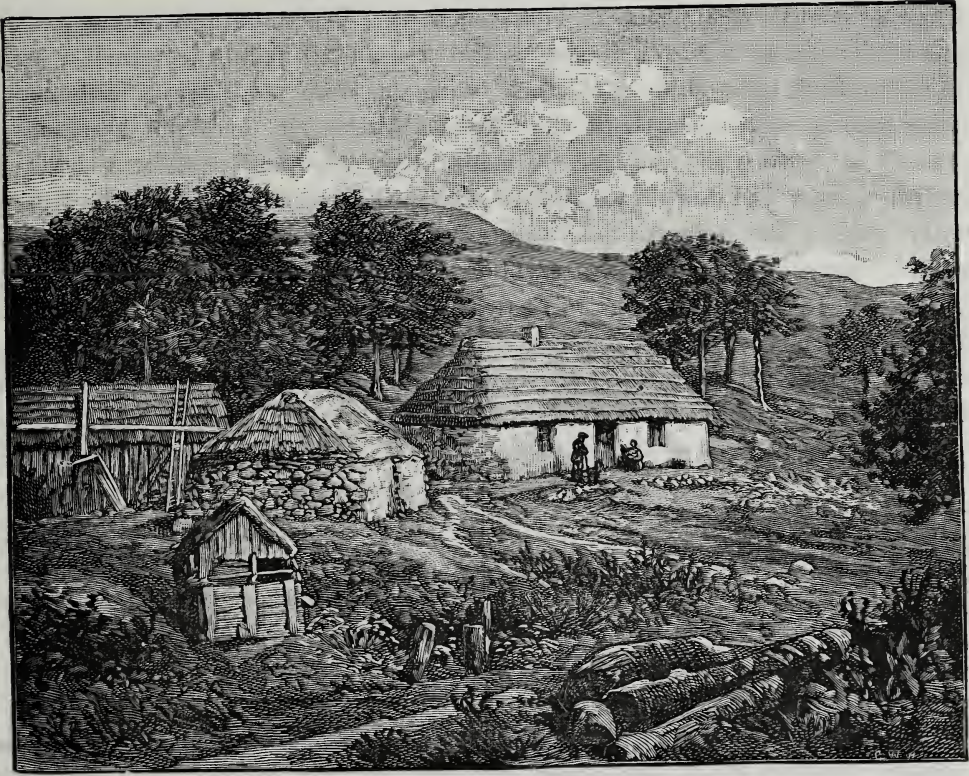


PRINCE ALBERT DEER-STALKING IN THE HIGHLANDS.

W. H. Stoddard

tainted with the *taquinerie*, of which M. Bastiat complained so bitterly to Mr. Cobden some years afterwards, and which ultimately rendered him as obnoxious personally to the Queen as he became to his own colleagues. About the end of September the Royal Family returned home, the Queen carrying with her, despite the bad weather, the brightest memories of lonely Ardverikie.

How complete, restful, and enjoyable the change of scene and occupation must have been for the Queen is brightly indicated by Lord Palmerston. He



HIGHLAND COTTAGES IN LOCHABER.

told Lord Campbell that her Majesty was greatly delighted with the Highlands, in spite of the bad weather, and "that she was accustomed to sally forth for a walk in the midst of a heavy rain, putting a great hood over her bonnet, and showing nothing of her features but her eyes. The Prince's invariable return to luncheon at two o'clock, in spite of grouse-shooting and deer-stalking, is explained by his voluntary desire to please the Queen, and by the intense hunger which always assails him at this hour, when he likes, in the German fashion, to make his dinner."* One is not surprised, then, that in some of her Majesty's letters to her relatives abroad, a note of regret is sounded over the exchange of this life of perfect freedom, for the

* Life of Lord Campbell, Vol. II., p. 226.

ceremony, constraint, and semi-publicity which make up the daily round of life at Court.

Out of the conversations and discussions with Lord Palmerston and Prince Leiningen at Ardvorkie grew projects for a policy of alliance with Germany, and foreshadowings of the great movement towards Unity which the Fatherland was, in the opinion of the Prince, bound to make under the leadership of Prussia. Nothing can be clearer than the Prince's prevision in discussing this theme, or sounder than his arguments for an Anglo-German alliance, based on geographical and ethnical considerations. Lord Palmerston apparently agreed that England and Germany had reason to fear the same enemies, France and Russia, and that they had therefore an obvious interest in strengthening each other. But the German Zollverein, excellent as it was as a means of paving the way for German Unity, imposed prohibitory duties on English goods, and Lord Palmerston stoutly held that an English Minister would neglect his duty to his country if he did not use his influence to prevent every German State not yet in the Customs Union from joining it. To sacrifice the Zollverein was to destroy the germ of German Unity, and here the divergence between Palmerston's views and those of the Court became patent. He was quite prepared to sacrifice the Zollverein in the cause of Free Trade. The Court was not.

CHAPTER XVIII.

REVOLUTION.

At Osborne—Beginnings of Revolution—The Reform Banquets in Paris—Lola Montes and the King of Bavaria—Downfall of Louis Philippe's Government—Flight of the King—Establishment of the Second Republic—The Queen and the Orleans Family—The Chartist Movement—Its Secret History—Its Leaders—The Queen Retreats to Osborne—The Chartist Meeting at Kennington—London in Terror—The Duke of Wellington's Precautions—Abortive Risings at Bonner's Fields and in Seven Dials—Riots in the Large Towns—Collapse of Chartism—Ireland and the "Young Irelanders"—The Rebellion of '48—The Battle of the Cabbage Garden—Arrest of Smith O'Brien and the "Young Ireland" Leaders—Austria and Prussia in Anarchy—Flight of Metternich—The Berlin Mob and the King—Anxiety of the English Court—The Queen's Correspondence with her Half-Sister—The Anglo-Spanish Quarrel—Sir H. Bulwer Expelled from Madrid—The Queen's Indignation at Lord Palmerston—Conversation between the Queen and Lord John Russell—Palmerston's Victory—The "Three Budget" Session—The Anti-Income-Tax Agitation—Blundering in Finance—"Scenes" in Parliament—Irish and Colonial Controversies—The Encumbered Estates Act—Repressive Legislation—Dawn of the Reform Agitation.

DURING the autumn Session of Parliament, while the Irish Coercion Bill was under debate, the Queen and her family retired to Osborne. Pleasant experiments in landscape gardening there formed an agreeable diversion from the distracting anxieties of foreign politics in London. And truly by this time affairs on the Continent began to assume a more threatening aspect than ever. In Switzerland the rebellion of the seven Catholic cantons of the Sonderbund

had been crushed by General Dufour, who commanded the forces of the other fifteen cantons. The rising was suppressed before the Cabinets of England, Austria, France, Russia, and Prussia had time to intervene. But in Italy the popular party, excited by rumours of Lord Minto's sympathy with their movement, were stirring up the people against their Austrian masters. The Pope was growing afraid of his own diluted Liberalism. France was rapidly becoming demoralised. Sensational trials in the law courts revealed a shocking amount of corruption in official circles in Paris. The deficit in the Budget was greater than had been anticipated. Louis Philippe was accused of debauching the electorate and the Representative Chamber by bribery; his quarrel with England, and his futile attempt to win compensatory alliances elsewhere, destroyed his prestige; the Liberal Party, secretly encouraged by his enemy, Lord Palmerston, attacked his Government with every weapon of invective and ridicule; his Ministers had lost the confidence of the people, and the demand for a wide extension of the franchise accordingly became loud and deep. To this demand, perfectly reasonable in itself, the King and his Minister, M. Guizot, offered the most dogged and infatuated opposition.

The movement in North Italy against Austrian domination also created an agitation for reforms in the Two Sicilies, to which the King would make no concessions whatever. The Royal troops, in January, 1848, were beaten in an attempt to quell a revolt in the island of Sicily, and a futile compromise was scornfully rejected by the insurgents, who insisted on nothing less than the Constitution of 1812, and the assembly of a Parliament at Palermo. Naples in turn became restive, whereupon the terrified King dismissed his autocratic advisers, formed a Liberal Ministry, and granted a Constitution, with an amnesty, on the 12th of February. Even Lord Minto, Palmerston's unofficial emissary to "Young Italy," failed to persuade the Sicilians to accept it. But these concessions, barren as they were, forced the hands of the Pope and of the rulers of Tuscany and Sardinia, who in turn granted Constitutions. In fact, the tide of revolution was rising fast, and threatened to sweep everything before it in the Italian Peninsula.

Opinions differ as to what was the spark that lit the conflagration which made 1848 the *annus mirabilis* of Revolution. It has been customary to say it was the stupid opposition of Louis Philippe and M. Guizot to the Reform banquets in France, which were fixed for the 22nd of February. Lord Malmesbury, however, traces the origin of the outbreak to the popular disturbances in Munich early in the month. The people of Munich, it seems, were incensed against the King, who had dismissed his Prime Minister, Prince Wallenstein, for advising him to expel his mistress, Lola Montes, from Bavaria after her infamous influence had become paramount in the Royal councils.* Lola Montes had a most extraordinary career. She first appeared in society in London in Lord Malmesbury's house, where she sang ballads—Spanish

* Memoirs of an Ex Minister, Vol. I., p. 208.

ballads—and was spoken of as the widow of a certain Don Diego Leon, who had been shot by the Carlists. His lordship, an easy, good-natured man, had made her acquaintance in a railway carriage coming up from Southampton, and that was the story she had told him. She was permitted to sell laces, veils, trinkets, and “curios” to Lord Malmesbury’s guests at his private concerts, so that she might earn a little money, while trying to dispose of some



THE REVOLUTION IN PARIS: CROWDS SINGING “MOURIR POUR LA PATRIE.”

“property,” about which there was much mystery. Then she went on the stage at the Opera House as a dancer, but was a failure. It ultimately turned out that she was a rank impostor, for instead of being the widow of a Spanish Don, she was a “Spaniard” from Cork, who had married an Irish officer called James, in the Company’s service in India. It was after her failure at the Opera House that she captivated the King of Bavaria, who used to permit her to review the Royal army, and amuse him by slashing the faces of his veteran generals with her riding-whip, when their troops failed to reach her standard of smartness. On the 19th of February she was driven from Munich—the troops refusing to fire on the people. Her house was sacked, and her collection of pictures destroyed.

M. Guizot, on the 21st of February, prohibited the Reform banquet in

Paris. On Tuesday the 22nd the National Guard had revolted, and the mob from behind barricades attacked the troops. On Wednesday not one-tenth of the National Guards answered the roll-call. The Government was paralysed with panic; Ministers resigned, and M. Odillon Barrot impeached M. Guizot. The insurrection rapidly made headway, and on the 24th Louis Philippe abdicated in favour of his son, the Comte de Paris, and fled from his capital.



LANDING OF LOUIS PHILIPPE AT NEWHAVEN.

As soon as the Royal Family had left the Tuileries, the mob gutted the Palace, smashing everything in it but the throne, which they carried through the streets, amidst shrieks of derision. M. Lamartine formed a Provisional Government, which proclaimed a Republic. The King and Queen, it seems, made their way to Dreux, where, thanks to a friendly farmer, they procured disguises. After wandering to Trouville and Honfleur, they ultimately embarked in a fishing-boat, and were picked up by the Southampton steamer, *Express*, which had been hovering off Havre to meet the fugitives. On the 3rd of March, about midnight, his Majesty, under the name of "Mr. Smith," was shivering in a little public-house at Newhaven, called the "Bridge Inn." On the 4th they reached London, and immediately drove to Claremont. Other members of the Royal Family of France arrived by devious ways, after much

variety of perilous adventure, and were received by the Queen with a generous hospitality, the warmth of which was indeed far from pleasing to the English people.

England had neither forgotten nor forgiven the hostile duplicity of Louis Philippe's foreign policy, and even Prince Albert had to beg her Majesty—whose heart has always been easily touched by the spectacle of sorrow or misfortune—to moderate her expression of sympathy for the dethroned monarch. In the House of Commons some of the Radicals, alarmed at the Ministerial proposals to increase the military expenditure of the country, professed to see in these courtly demonstrations of compassion additional proofs of hostile designs, on the part of England, against the French Republic. Cobden, in a letter to his friend, Mr. George Combe, of Edinburgh, said he dreaded the revival of the Treaty of Vienna, for he suspected that the Court and the aristocracy were eager to make war on the Republic. So far as Prince Albert was concerned this, as we have seen, was an unjust suspicion. But it was equally unjust to the Queen. "We do everything we can for the poor family," she wrote to King Leopold, "who are indeed sorely to be pitied. But you will naturally understand that we cannot make common cause with them, and cannot take a hostile position to the new state of things in France."* In truth, Louis Philippe—who complained to the Queen that Palmerston's intrigues with the Liberals in France had upset his Government—deserved his fate. The outbreak which followed the foolish prohibition of the Reform banquet was only that of a turbulent mob. The King had a large and loyal army at his back, and the proverbial "whiff of grapeshot" would at the outset have quelled the rising. Louis Philippe, however, lacked the courage to defend his crown, and his flight transformed a riot into a revolution. At the same time the French people acquiesced in the Revolution of '48 for various reasons, which have been very fairly stated by two of the shrewdest observers of the day, Sir Robert Peel and M. Alexis de Tocqueville. When Mr. Hume crossed the floor of the House of Commons one evening, and carried the news of Louis Philippe's fall to Peel, the latter whispered to Hume:—"This comes of trying to govern the country through a narrow representation in Parliament, without regarding the wishes of those outside. It is what the Party behind me wanted me to do in the matter of the Corn Laws, and I would not do it."† M. de Tocqueville, three weeks before the Revolution, predicted the catastrophe in a speech in the Chamber, in which he warned the Government that it was trembling on a volcano of Socialism.‡ In a letter to Mr. Senior he says that the real cause of the Revolution was "the detestable spirit which animated the Government during this long reign; a spirit of trickery, of baseness, and of bribery, which has enervated and degraded the middle classes, destroyed

* Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort*, Chap. XXIV.

† Cobden's *Speeches*, Vol. II., p. 548.

‡ *Le Moniteur*, 28th January, 1847.

their public spirit, and filled them with a selfishness so blind as to induce them to separate their interests entirely from those of the lower classes, from whence they sprang," who were thus delivered over to the quacks of Communism, and the tyranny of ideas, destructive not merely of ministries and dynasties, but of moral order and civil society.* An elected legislature, springing from a narrow franchise, and a strong centralised Government, were both manipulated for dynastic, as distinguished from national, purposes, by a selfish monarch, who had not the courage to defend his throne. The vast increase in material wealth which Louis Philippe's reign brought to France, held as it was by a limited class, who had forfeited the respect of the nation, failed in these circumstances to avert the calamity that gave birth to the Second Republic.

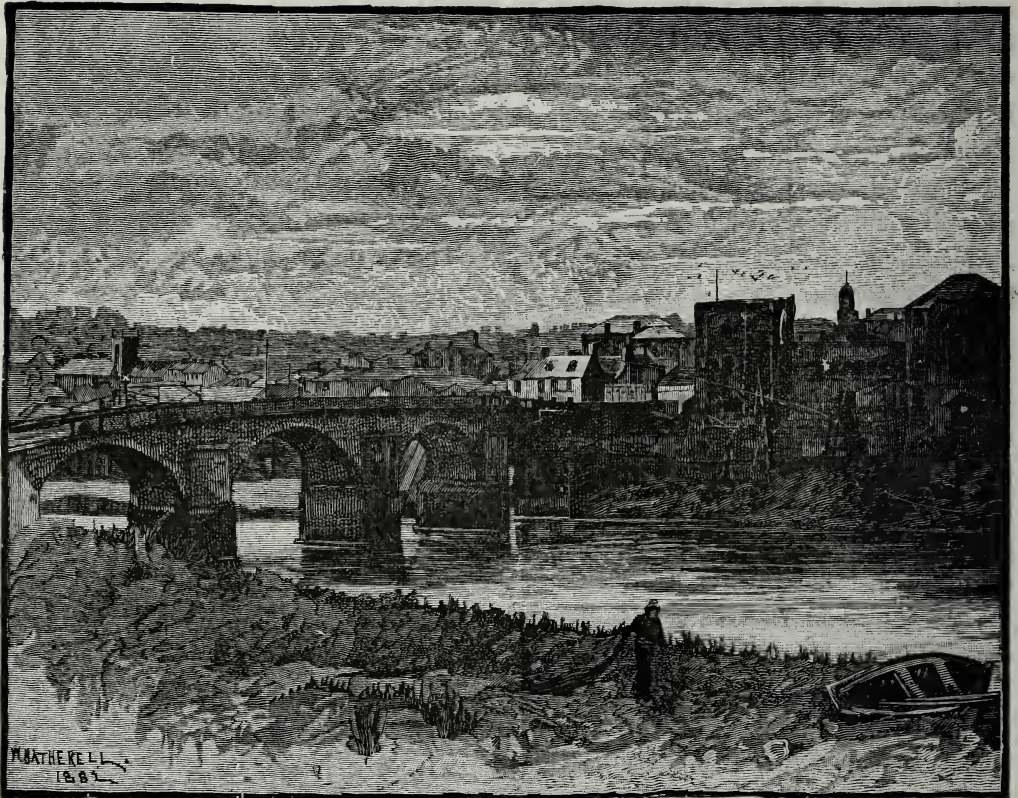
England, more fortunate than France, was but lightly touched by the edge of the Revolutionary cyclone. It caused a few Chartist riots in Great Britain, and the rising of the Nationalist Party in Ireland, headed by Mr. Smith O'Brien.

On the 6th of March, whilst the Budget controversy was raging in the House of Commons, Mr. Cochrane, a defeated candidate for the representation of Westminster, organised a popular demonstration against the proposal to increase the Income Tax. A misguided mob, who had no incomes to tax, converted the meeting into a riot in Trafalgar Square, which the police suppressed. On the 5th of March Glasgow was surprised by a mob of unemployed workmen, and it took three days ere the police and the military forces, reinforced by special constables, restored order. Riots were also suppressed in Edinburgh, Manchester, and Newcastle. In London, however, the Chartists threatened to assemble on Kennington Common 150,000 men. Under the leadership of Feargus O'Connor they were to march to Westminster, ostensibly for the purpose of presenting to the House of Commons a monster petition, explaining their grievances, and demanding reform.

The grievance of the Chartists was really the grievance of the working classes. Their alliance and support enabled the middle classes to wring from the Crown and the Peers the Reform Bill of 1832. But the middle class alone profited by that Bill, which transferred political power from the aristocracy to the shopocracy, leaving the artisans and manual toilers unenfranchised. Why their persistent agitation for political privileges since 1832 should have led people to believe that revolution was impending in 1848, has been considered a mystery, especially as the outbreak on Kennington Common was a *fiasco*. Yet there was good reason for this panic. From Lord Grey's correspondence it is now clear that the country was on the brink of civil war in 1831, when the King resisted Reform. But from 1831 to 1848, the resistance to an extension of the franchise had come not from the Crown, but from the

* Correspondence and Conversations of Alexis de Tocqueville with Nassau William Senior, edited by M. P. Simpson, Vol. I., p. 37.

House of Commons. When, however, the House of Commons obstructs progress in England—and it is apt to do so whenever it gets the chance—the situation becomes serious. Obstruction from the Sovereign, if unreasonable and malignant, can always be met by the power of the Commons to stop supplies. Obstruction by the Upper House can be met by the power of the Crown to create new Peers. For obstruction by the House of Commons,

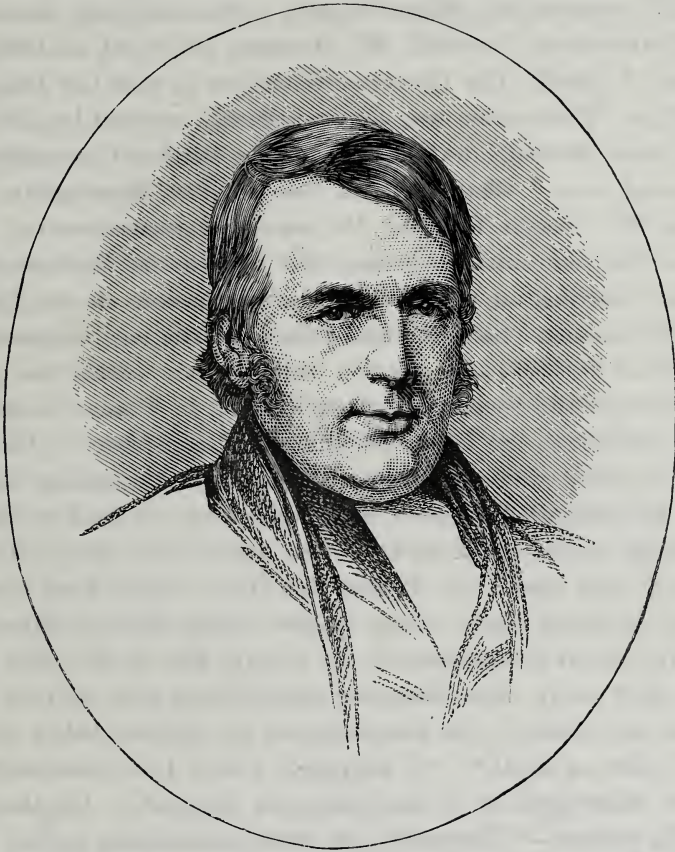


BRIDGE AND CASTLE, NEWPORT, MON.

however, it was felt that there was no real remedy but argument or revolution—argument if the people were comfortable and patient, revolution if they were hungry and impatient.

The Chartist organisation of 1839—which collapsed with the Newport riots—was really a gigantic secret society. It was organised by Major Beniowski, a Polish teacher of mnemonics, three working men—Cardo, a shoemaker, Warden, a gardener, one Westropp (occupation unknown)—and a mysterious individual, said to be a foreign police spy. On a given hour, on a given day, twenty cities were to be burned to the ground, and a reign of terror was to be inaugurated. The late Mr. David Urquhart claimed to have discovered the conspiracy, and to have broken it up by demonstrating to some of the leading

workmen implicated that two of its chiefs were Russian agents, who had some time before planned a similar outbreak in Greece. Suspecting they were being used as tools of a Foreign Power, the English conspirators countermanded the order for a simultaneous rising, and thus it came to pass that the outbreak in Wales, where Beniowski was in command, was the sole result of the movement. There is good reason to believe that the Chartists were working



JOSEPH STURGE.

with Continental revolutionists, but it must not be forgotten that Mr. Urquhart suffered from a monomania, which took the odd form that everybody who differed from him was a Russian spy.* The political position of the Chartists was rather curious. The Tories were the only Party who showed them any sympathy, for they shared their antagonism to the Reform settlement of 1832, which was essentially a Whig settlement. Then the Chartists were

* For much interesting information on Chartism, the reader who desires to study the subject further may profitably refer to *Forty Years' Recollections*, by Thomas Frost; *Frost's Secret Societies of the European Revolution*; *Urquhart's Diplomatic Review*; *Molesworth's History of England*; *Memoirs and Correspondence of Thomas Slingsby Duncombe*; *Gammage's Narrative of the Chartist Movement*; and *Sybil*, or the *Two Nations*, by Lord Beaconsfield.

always suspicious of the Free Trade movement as a capitalists' agitation, the real object of which was not to give the people cheap bread, but to get them to work for low wages on the strength of reducing the price of food. Mr. Cobden's friends often complained that the Anti-Corn-Law League meetings were broken up by Chartist roughs, who were incited to violence by Tory Protectionists.

After the collapse of the conspiracy at Newport, the Chartists formed a purely political organisation, whose objects were admirably described in the able and moderate speech in which Mr. Sharman Crawford, in 1842, attempted, without success, to pledge the House of Commons to take the People's Charter into consideration. The motion was contemptuously rejected by 226 to 67. The Chartists were then divided into two parties—the London Convention, representing the “physical force” Chartists, and the smaller Birmingham Convention, identified with Mr. Joseph Sturge. He aimed at reconstructing the alliance between the working and middle classes, that had carried Parliamentary Reform in 1832, and at starting an agitation for an extension of the Franchise, and for triennial Parliaments. Both factions joined in bringing the pressure of agitation on Parliament in 1848, an agitation which it now seems was quite peaceful in its intent, though the revolutionary excitement in France naturally induced the well-to-do classes to see in it an anarchical conspiracy. The first check the Chartists received was the intimation that their meeting and their procession would be prohibited because both were likely to lead to disturbances.

It is amusing to look back now on the panic that smote the upper and middle classes at this time. On Friday, the 7th of April, Lord Campbell wrote to his brother, declaring that “many people believe that by Monday we shall be under a Provisional Government.” It is only fair to say that the Duke of Wellington scoffed at all these alarmist rumours—in fact, he told Lady Jersey that there was no reason to be alarmed, and he advised ladies who consulted him to drive about as usual.* “I suppose,” writes Lord Campbell again, “we shall all fly to Hartrigge—if I can escape in disguise.” On the 9th of April Campbell again writes:—“(Yesterday) we were considering in the Cabinet how the Chartists should be dealt with, and when it was determined that the procession should be stopped after it had moved, we agreed that the particular place where it should be stopped was purely a military question. The Duke of Wellington was requested to come to us, which he did very readily. We had then a regular council of war, as upon the eve of a great battle. We examined maps and returns and information of the movements of the enemy. After long deliberation, plans of attack and defence were formed to meet every contingency. The quickness, intelligence, and decision which the Duke displayed were very striking, and he inspired us all with perfect confidence by the dispositions which he prescribed. There are now above 7,000 regular troops in London, besides a train of artillery. The special constables are, as you will see, countless.

* *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, by Lord Malmesbury, Vol. I., p. 224.

We are most afraid of disturbances after the procession is dispersed, and of the town being set fire to in the night." This was a memorable Cabinet meeting, and Macaulay said he should remember it to his dying day.*

The demonstration, which frightened everybody except the Duke of Wellington, took place on Monday, the 10th of April—a hot spring morning favouring the objects of the agitators. The delegates first of all met in convention at 9 a.m. in the Literary and Scientific Institution, John Street, Fitzroy Square, and received an intimation from the Commissioners of Police that the "Monster" Petition might be taken to the House of Commons, but that no procession would be allowed to accompany it. Mr. Feargus O'Connor gave the delegates prudent and pacific advice, but they resolved to adjourn to Kennington Common, hold their meeting, and then proceed in procession with the petition to Westminster in spite of all opposition.

Gradually the ever-increasing mass of agitators marched on, crossing the Thames at Blackfriars Bridge, and reaching Kennington Common at 11.30 a.m. A communication was then made to Mr. O'Connor by the police authorities, the result of which was that a compromise was arrived at. Mr. Mayne, the Commissioner of Police, agreed to permit the prohibited meeting to be held, and Mr. O'Connor agreed to abandon the idea of a procession, and to pass his word that the demonstration would be conducted in an orderly manner. The authorities had arranged to block the bridges with police and, if need be, troops. Even "physical force" Chartists like Mr. Ernest Jones could only accept the situation, whilst regretting that the meeting had not been held on the other side of the river, in which case they would not have had to recross the bridges to march on the House of Commons. Mr. Jones admitted, however, that they were not prepared to fight the authorities, and he, too, advised the meeting to disperse peacefully. Spasmodic outbreaks of horseplay and demonstrations of displeasure from isolated groups of agitators took place. A man called Spurr, supported by Mr. Cuffey, insisted on going on with the procession until they were stopped, whereupon they could withdraw the petition on the ground that they had met with illegal resistance.

During the day the streets presented the appearance of a holiday. The police were withdrawn from their beats, and concentrated on special points, the town being patrolled by special constables—among whom, by the way, Prince Charles Louis Bonaparte, afterwards Napoleon III., was enrolled—who wore white bands on their arms, and carried truncheons as emblems of authority. These patriotic citizens were mercilessly ridiculed by their ungrateful fellow-citizens, who passed rude remarks on their awkward appearance and their incongruities of stature and costume. People were extremely unfeeling in their comments on the appearance of certain "specials" who wore spectacles or eyeglasses, and who carried umbrellas in addition to their staves. All the public buildings were garrisoned with troops; the

* Life and Letters of John, Lord Campbell, by the Hon. Mrs. Hardcastle.

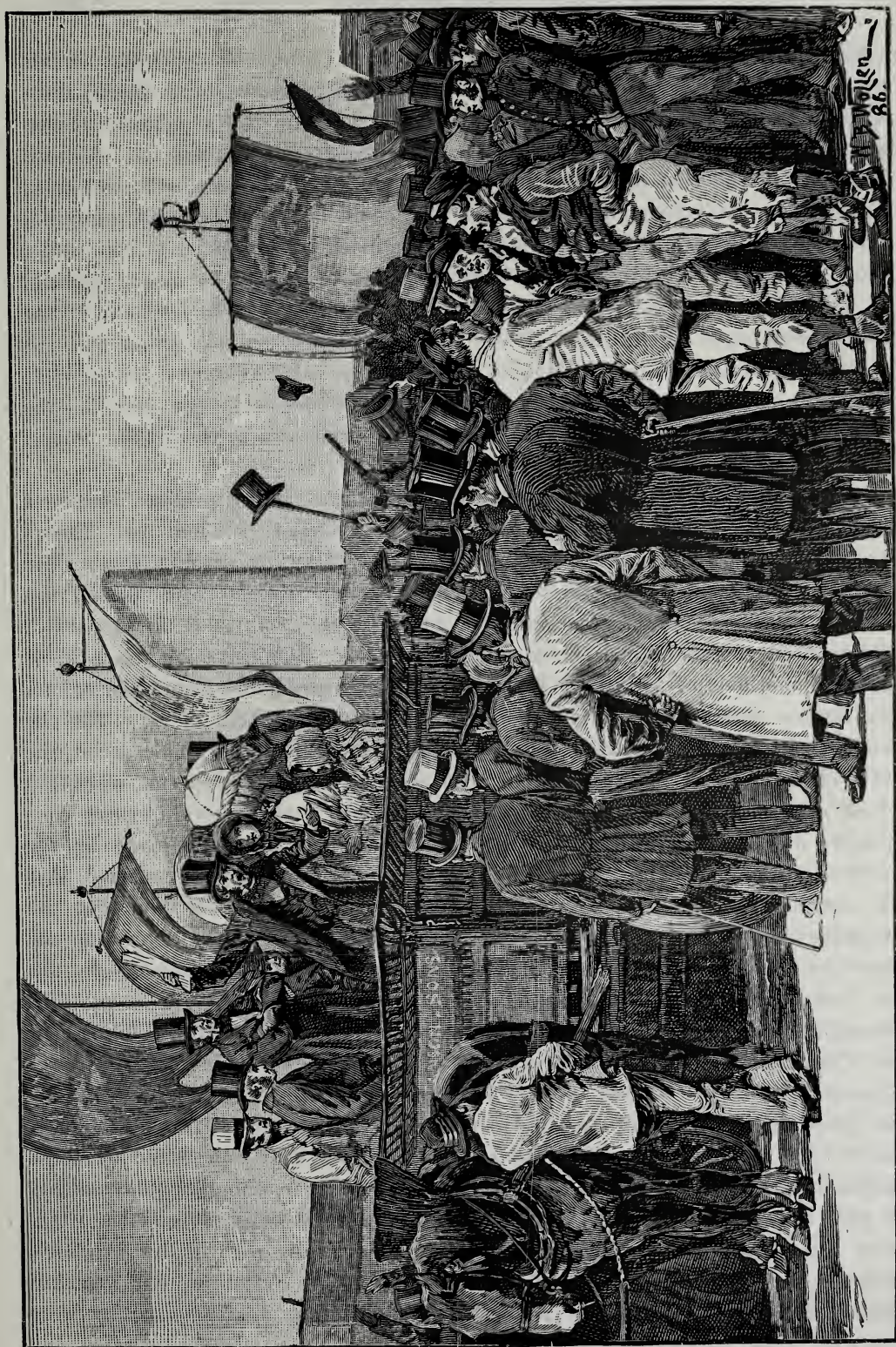
clerks in the public offices formed special corps of defence, and many gentlemen of rank brought up their gamekeepers from the country, armed them, and prepared their mansions for a regular siege.* Trafalgar Square was occupied by 200 police. The parks were closed; a corporal's guard of the Household Troops held each entrance to them, and patrols of the Guards



FEARGUS O'CONNOR.

marched up and down the Mall. Apsley House was barricaded, and Mr. Carlyle says Piccadilly was almost deserted, the Green Park shut, "even the footpaths of it;" and "in the inside stood a score of mounted Guardsmen, privately drawn up under the arch—dreadful cold, I daresay. For the rest, not a single fashionable carriage was in the street, not a private vehicle, but, I think, two surgeons' broughams all the way to Egyptian Hall, omnibuses running, a few street carts, even a mud-cart or two; nothing else; the flag pavements also

* Memoirs of an Ex-Minister.



THE CHARTIST DEMONSTRATION ON KENNINGTON COMMON.

nearly vacant, not a fifth of the usual population there, and those also of the strictly business kind." * Buckingham Palace was protected by a strong force under arms at Wellington Barracks, ready to march on it the moment it was threatened. The Bank was fortified by a company of Sappers and Miners, who built on the roof platforms for cannon, and guarded them with loopholed breastworks of sandbags, &c., so that a mob could be swept away by grapeshot at a moment's notice. Special constables, organised by Aldermen of the wards, guarded the City. Hardly a single red-coat, however, was to be seen anywhere, but at various strategic points troops were in readiness, to be let loose if the mob showed signs of fighting. There was a fight between the police and the mob at Blackfriars Bridge. But the police who guarded Waterloo Bridge were able to amuse themselves as they pleased. No Chartists came near it—the bridge being guarded by something much more formidable to them than troops, namely, the man who kept the toll-bar.

When the events of the 18th ended with the contemptuous treatment which the House of Commons gave to the Chartist petition, two things happened. The upper middle class burst into a chorus of triumph over their successful suppression of anarchy. The working classes who joined the Chartist movement were flung into the arms of the "physical force party," who pointed to the failure of the petition and the demonstration, as a proof that the methods of agitation favoured by Mr. Sturge and the Birmingham Convention were futile. It is important to keep these facts in view, for the transformation of the Chartist movement into a movement of violence after the 10th of April, has led many writers to assume that the peaceful agitation which culminated in the Kennington meeting was truly a revolutionary conspiracy, which was put down by the courageous demonstration made by the Party of Order. The facts that the meeting at Kennington was unarmed, that its numbers, so far from reaching 100,000, did not exceed 20,000, that the existence of a toll-bar on one of the bridges was sufficient to determine the direction which the "revolutionary" procession should take, and, above all, the fact that the meeting was held on the Surrey side of the river, thus leaving the police and troops in complete command of the bridges in rear of the Chartists—all indicate that up to the 10th there was no serious idea of appealing to arms. It was absurd to argue that the event was dwarfed by the preparations which were made to meet it, for these preparations were kept secret. On the other hand, a good effect was subsequently produced by these preparations, for they showed that the Party of Order, though quite willing to give Mr. Feargus O'Connor full liberty to play the braggart and the fool, were also determined to maintain the law against any mob of law-breakers, however strong or however turbulent. They gave agitators fair warning that in England, at least, the resources of civilisation against anarchy were

* Letter to Mrs. Carlyle. Thomas Carlyle: *A History of his Life in London*, by J. A. Froude, Vol. I., p. 434.

by no means exhausted. The Queen had with some hesitation yielded to the advice of the Cabinet, and had removed the Court to Osborne during this anxious period. But she and Prince Albert both kept a vigilant eye on events as they unfolded themselves in the metropolis. Writing to King Leopold on the 11th of April, she says:—"Thank God, the Chartist meeting and procession have turned out a complete failure! The loyalty of the people at large has been very striking, and their indignation at their peace being interfered with by such wanton and worthless men immense."* Albany Fonblanque had the fairness to admit that it was "clear that the bulk of the London Chartists have no disposition to commit themselves to the chances of involving it in outrage;"† and Mr. Cobden says, in one of his letters:—"In my opinion the Government and the newspapers have made too much fuss about it (the Chartist rising)."‡

The two men who got and deserved most credit for the happy termination of the Chartist meeting were Sir George Grey, the Home Secretary, and the Duke of Wellington, whose opinions on the affair had the greatest weight with the Queen. On the 11th of April, when all was quiet, the Duke of Wellington met Lord Campbell, and the following conversation took place between them:—"I went up to him," writes Lord Campbell, "and said, 'Well, Duke, it has all turned out as you foretold.' Duke—'Oh, yes, I was sure of it, and I never showed a soldier or a musket. But I was ready. I could have stopped them wherever you liked, and if they had been armed it would have been all the same.' Campbell—'They say they are to meet next on the north side of the town, and avoid the bridges.' Duke—'Every street can be made a bridge. I can stop them anywhere.' Campbell—'If your Grace had commanded Paris on the 25th of February, Louis Philippe would still have been on the throne.' Duke—'It would have been an easy matter. I should have made the Tuileries secure, and have kept my communications open.' Then, *more suo*, laying hold of my arm, and speaking very loud, and pointing with his finger, he added—'Always keep your communications open, and you need have nothing to fear.'"§

When the *fiasco* of the 10th of April put the Chartist organisation under the control of the "physical force" party, the first step was initiated by Mr. Ernest Jones in the National Convention. It was to reconstruct the whole Chartist body as a secret society, on the pattern of the United Irishmen. Moderate men were removed from the Executive Council, and agitators like Dr. Macdowall, who had taken a prominent part in the troubles of '39 and '42, were elected in their places. The change in their methods was first

* Martin's Life of the Prince Consort.

† Life and Labours of Albany Fonblanque, p. 217.

‡ Morley's Life of Cobden.

§ This was a favourite idea with the Duke. He attributed our Afghan disasters to our failure to keep open our communications

illustrated by the sudden assemblage, without warning, of a vast meeting of 80,000 men on Clerkenwell Green and Stepney Green, on the evening of the 29th of May, when processions from all parts of London also moved by converging routes to Smithfield, and then marched along Holborn, Oxford Street, Pall Mall, the Strand, Fleet Street, Ludgate Hill, to Finsbury Square, where they dispersed. This was a demonstration arranged to test the working of the new secret organisation. Rifles and pikes began to appear in the lodgings of the Chartists. An alliance was formed with some of the turbulent leaders of the "Young Ireland" Party. Spies were swarming in every city, and a



CHARTIST AGITATION: THE POLICE FORCE ON BONNER'S FIELDS.

(Reduced, by permission, after the Engraving in "The Illustrated London News.")

Secret Committee, consisting of seven men, named Cuffey, Ritchie, Lacey, Fay, Rose, Mullins, and a man named Powell, *alias* Johnson, who, though pretending to be a workman, was really a professional pedestrian, known in sporting public-houses as the "Welsh Nurse," began to plot a regular insurrection. Powell joined the Committee to betray it, and his counsels breathed of fire and slaughter. Ernest Jones had by this time been imprisoned for proclaiming to a meeting that the green flag would soon wave over Downing Street; and another man had also been imprisoned—one Williams—because in a speech he had insinuated that the Government was brutalising the people by letting the police beat them with truncheons, when they came into collision with Chartist meetings on Clerkenwell Green. Whit Monday, the 12th of June, was the day fixed on for the Revolution, and on that day the Metropolitan branches of the Society were to assemble on Blackheath and Bishop Bonner's.

Fields—meetings which were prohibited by the police as illegal. When warrants were issued for the arrest of Macdowall and the leaders, the Blackheath meeting was abandoned, and orders were given to concentrate a Chartist gathering on Bonner's Fields, so as to divert a large police force from the



WILLIAM SMITH O'BRIEN.

City. On the evening of the 12th the Chartists resolved to abandon the meeting on Bonner's Fields, not because the authorities at Scotland Yard prohibited it, but because it was raining, comforting themselves with the reflection that they had detained a large force of police and troops there to watch them. They were then in hopes, as Rose, one of the leaders, said to Mr. Frost, that in London by that time "they are at it hammer and tongs."*

* Forty Years' Recollections, by Thomas Frost, p. 161.

But when the time came for striking, the conspirators were unprepared, and nothing was done. Some of the leaders—like Cuffey—now felt that it was hopeless to attempt an armed revolt, yet the forces behind them were too strong to be controlled, and they were compelled to go on when they would have drawn back. They accordingly fixed the 15th of August for the grand effort; but on that day, when waiting in the “Orange Tree” public-house, in Orange Street, Bloomsbury, they were suddenly arrested by a small body of armed police. “A sword,” writes Mr. Frost, “was found under the coat of one, and the head of a pike, made to screw into a socket, under that of another. One had a pair of pistols in his pocket, and the fourth was provided with a rusty bayonet, fastened on the end of a stick. Some were without other weapons than shoemakers’ knives. A pike, which no one would own, was found under a bench.”

At this moment groups of surly-looking labourers were lounging in the streets and at the bars of public-houses in the Seven Dials. Suddenly a man with haggard eyes and a face pale with fear was seen to rush into the midst of a group at the corner of St. Andrew’s Street, and whisper a few hurried words to a labourer, who with a pickaxe was fumbling about a loose stone in the causeway. He was then seen darting from group to group, from public-house to public-house, and very soon the police began to hover in the distance. In a few minutes the groups of loungers had almost entirely disappeared, and the public-houses were mysteriously emptied. There is reason to believe that the flag of revolution was to have been first raised in the Seven Dials, where the first barricades were to have been flung up, the spot, says Mr. Frost, who was a leading Chartist, being chosen “on account of its contiguity to Whitehall, and the facilities offered by its narrow streets, radiating in so many directions from a common centre, for a rapid advance.” The pale-faced man, whose appearance was the signal for the dispersal of the loungers round the Seven Dials, was an emissary from the “Orange Tree,” bringing tidings of the arrests there. Cuffey, Ritchie, Lacey, and Fay were tried for sedition, and sentenced to transportation for life. Mullins received a long term of imprisonment. Powell, the spy, instead of a handsome reward, only got a free passage to Australia, where, being an idle fellow, he did not remain long. What became of him is not known. The other spy, a constable named Mullins, was subsequently dismissed from the police force for misconduct, and after a career of crime was hanged for murdering an old woman called Elmsley, at Hackney, for the sake of a few pounds she had in her house. The Chartist organisation broke up. Its members, finding that the working classes alone could effect nothing, sensibly reverted to the programme of Mr. Sturge and the Birmingham Convention. They accordingly joined the Parliamentary Reform Association, which was launched into existence by the middle-class Radicals, under the auspices of Mr. Joseph Hume and his political associates.

Writing to Baron Stockmar about the collapse of the Chartist meeting at Kennington, Prince Albert says, in one of his letters—"I hope this will read with advantage on the Continent. Ireland still looks dangerous." It had looked so "dangerous" at the end of 1847 that its condition, together with the commercial panic in England, had caused Parliament to be summoned in the November of that year. Now the country, under the misguidance of the "Young Irelanders," was drifting into civil war.

It is not difficult to be generous to a "lost cause," and in the "Young Ireland" movement, which ended in the disaster of '48, there is much that enlists the sympathies of liberal-minded liberty-loving men. It sprang from a reaction among the youth of the educated and literary classes, against the coarse vulgarity of O'Connell's methods of agitation. His favourite weapon was race-hatred. This he roused by passionate appeals to bitter memories of the past, when "the base, bloody, and brutal Saxon" trod the Celt under foot, tortured his priests, desecrated his altars, and proscribed his faith. The "Young Irelanders," especially after Catholic Emancipation, felt that no practical good was done to the rack-rented peasantry by denunciations of Cromwell's tyranny. Moving diatribes against Elizabethan oppression, in their opinion, did still less to reform the bad government, the weak executive, and alien bureaucracy of Ireland in the Victorian era. O'Connell's aim was to pit the Celtic Catholics against the Protestant Anglo-Irish. The "Young Ireland" Party aimed at uniting all Irish patriots, irrespective of creed or caste, in a purely political and secular movement for emancipating the peasantry from landlordism, and Ireland from English government. Sir Charles Gavan Duffy,* one of the founders of the movement, says that its leaders favoured constitutional agitation, but, if compelled to adopt stronger measures, they were ready to accept the arbitrament of the sword. Their mistake lay in committing themselves to this latter part of their programme, without possessing the means of carrying it out. When they did that, success could alone distinguish their policy from treason.

The "Young Irelanders" were led by Thomas Osborne Davis, Charles Gavan Duffy, John Blake Dillon, and several other young men of enthusiasm and talent, and their movement was literary as well as political. They became an organised party in 1842, when the *Nation* newspaper was started, under Duffy's editorship—a paper, says the late Mr. P. J. Smyth,† which was "filled with a spirit of intense nationality." Its articles, political and historical, its ballads and lyrics, both pathetic and humorous, were all devoted to glorify the achievements of Irishmen in the past, or give voice to their passions, aspirations, and demands in the present. All hereditary feuds, the "Young Irelanders" said, must be forgotten. Ireland was to be Irish—not Anglo-Irish or Celtic. All men who loved her were to be ranked as Irishmen.

* *Young Ireland: a Fragment of Irish History*, by Sir C. Gavan Duffy (Cassell & Company).

† *Young Ireland. Fortnightly Review*, December, 1880.

Hereditary party spirit they regarded, wrote Sir C. Gavan Duffy, as an *ignis fatuus* in a country "where the lineal descendants of the O'Neils, O'Briens, and O'Connors were Ministers, and where Philpot Curran, Wolfe Tone, and Theobald Mathew sprang from Cromwellian soldiers." The agitators were a little hazy and vague and self-contradictory as to the precise amount of



CHARLES GAVAN DUFFY (1843).

allegiance which they would yield to the Imperial Government; and Davis, in his correspondence with Daniel Owen Maddyn, rails as much at English *ideas*—English Utilitarianism, Materialism, and "Sensualism"—as at the supremacy of the Pope or Protestant ascendancy. Just before the outbreak of '48, too, Mr. Smith O'Brien's avowed object, as leader of the "Young Irelanders," was to set up in Ireland an independent Republic. On the land question, however, they were sound and moderate. They demanded security of tenure, fair rents, free sale of tenant-right, and reasonable facilities for the natural growth of

peasant proprietors. But, said they in their manifesto in the *Nation*, "we are not ready to jump into a servile war for this purpose," and, as Mr. P. J. Smyth has observed, they taught that "expropriation, if it could be realised, would be disastrous." Davis, who was poet-laureate of the movement, was a Protestant of Welsh descent, Duffy and Dillon were Catholics.

"Young Ireland" soon fell out with O'Connell and the patriots of Conciliation Hall. O'Connell's organ, the *Pilot*, attacked the *Nation* for its



THE IRISH REBELLION OF 1848: FORGING PIKES.

atheism. The *Nation* retorted that O'Connell betrayed Ireland by abandoning the "divine right of Revolution" for Whig alliances. In 1845 Davis died, and the leadership of the Party passed into the hands of William Smith O'Brien, his lieutenants being John Mitchel and John Martin. All three were Protestants. Mr. Smith O'Brien was descended from King Brian Borhoimè—who played the part of Alfred the Great in Irish history. A brother of Lord Inchiquin, he was an aristocrat and a Tory, with frigid manners, and a high and chivalrous sense of honour. He had drifted into the "Young Ireland" Party, firstly, because fourteen years' experience of the Imperial Parliament convinced him that it could not legislate wisely for Ireland, and, secondly, because he despaired of any other Party obtaining for Ireland the only Government that

could lift her to her place among the nations. As a speaker he was cold, logical, and stilted. But he had a severe and ascetic sense of public duty, and his fidelity and truthfulness secured for him the unswerving loyalty of his followers.

It was in 1847 that "Young Ireland" first came into collision with the authorities. John Mitchel, whose violent teaching was abhorred by O'Brien, virtually seceded from the Party represented by the *Nation*. He had started the *United Irishman*, and he made it a venomous advocate of Revolution. The outbreak in Paris, in 1848, put the game in Mitchel's hands. The populace imagined that no government could stand against a mob. "Confederate" Clubs sprang up like mushrooms, and Mitchel became so reckless in his appeals to force that the Government were compelled to "gag" him. He was arrested and sentenced to fourteen years' transportation for treason-felony, on the 20th of May, 1848. O'Brien and Meagher, who had been prosecuted in March, escaped because the juries disagreed.

Dr. Kevin Izod O'Doherty and Mr. D'Alton Williams, a fortnight after Mitchel's condemnation, brought out a new organ, the *Irish Tribune*, and Martin, "honest John Martin," as he was called, followed up with the *Felon*, a paper whose teachings were so abominably bloodthirsty that Albany Fonblanque, in the *Examiner*, suggested it ought to be called the *Fiend*.* The sole defence for a truculence, which can be paralleled only by the ravings of Marat, is that the "Young Irelanders" had been goaded to madness by the terrible scenes of the famine, and the apparent impotence of the English Government either to prevent or cope with that hideous calamity. Five weeks after the *Felon* appeared, Martin, Williams, O'Doherty, and Duffy were arrested. The Habeas Corpus Act was suspended, and warrants were out against Mr. Smith O'Brien and Meagher (pronounced Maär), the latter the fiercest and most eloquent of their orators. They felt they had now gone too far to draw back, though it would have been easy for them to do so by simply letting themselves be arrested. They considered it their duty to offer to head a rebellion before they were captured; but when they appealed to the people to rise, they found that the peasants hardly knew who they were. They were looked on askance as the men who had quarrelled with O'Connell, and were denounced by the priests. Even if the peasants had been willing, famine had left them physically unfit for battle. Why dwell on the story of the wretched *fiasco* that was called the "rebellion" of '48? The small band of patriots who joined the standards of the insurgents had few arms—pikes, old guns, and scythes were

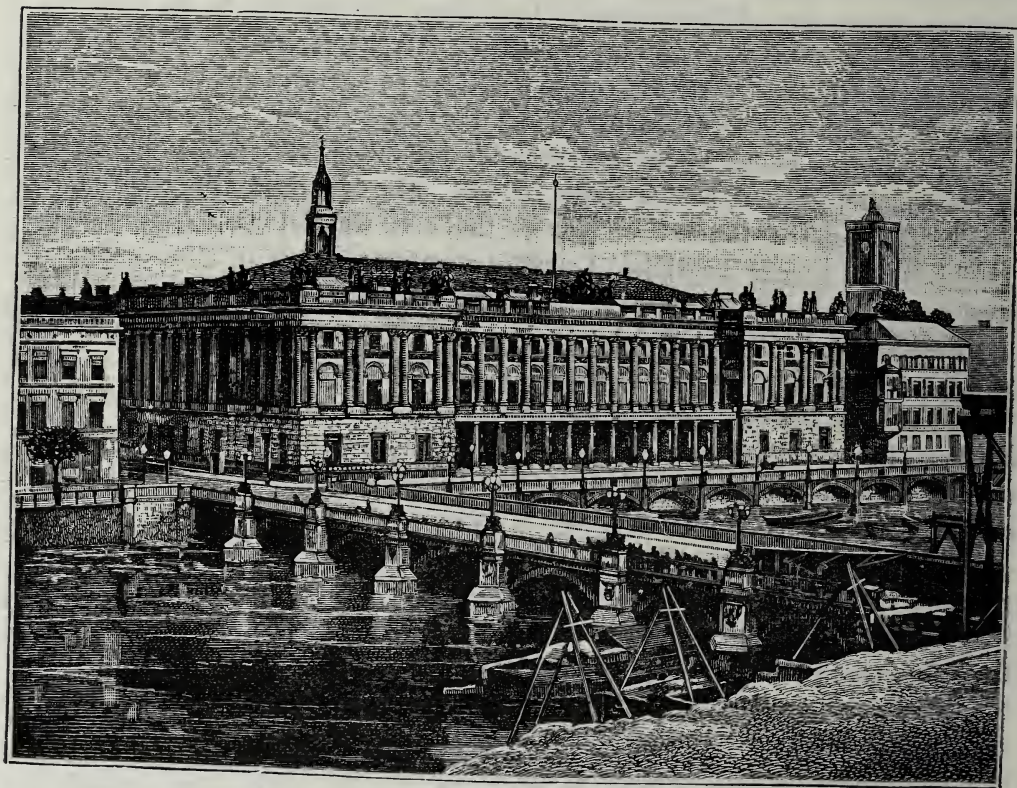
* "It is a peculiarity of Irish rebellion that it counts so much on the co-operation of women, who are to be nothing less than unsexed for its purposes. Women are to squirt vitriol, and women are to put on hoops—not hoops on their own persons, but hoops on the persons of her Majesty's soldiers, hoops wrapped round with turpentine, steeped in tow and fired. . . . The *Felon* newspaper has run its short course. An apter name should be chosen for the next organ of the Mitchel doctrines. The *Fiend* should be the title."—*Examiner*.

their chief weapons. They had no commissariat, no generals, and no plan of campaign. A barricade, commanded by Dillon, was "rushed" at Killenaule. At Ballingarry a party under Mr. Smith O'Brien, hailed by his followers as "King of Munster," on the 26th of July besieged six policemen, who had taken refuge in a farmhouse belonging to a widow called Cormack. The police refused to surrender, and on the 29th Mr. O'Brien, with reinforcements, again appeared. Another party of policemen came on the scene. A few shots were exchanged, and then the insurgents tried to fire the building. "The widow Cormack, whose five children were in the house," writes Mr. A. M. Sullivan,* "rushed to the rebel chief, flung herself on her knees, and asked him if he was going to stain his name and cause by an act so barbarous as the destruction of her little ones." Mr. O'Brien ordered the combustibles to be flung aside, and his followers, galled by the fire from the improvised fortalice, and disgusted by his soft-heartedness, beat a hasty retreat. The leader of the insurrection, like Scott's Highland Chieftain, "took to the hills, and became a broken man." On the 5th of August he walked from his mountain refuge to Thurles Railway Station. When taking a ticket for Limerick, a guard named Hulme recognised and arrested him. With Meagher, Leine, and O'Donoghue, who were captured in the same locality, he was lodged in Kilmainham Gaol. O'Brien and his comrades were tried at Clonmel on the 21st of September, and sentenced to death. This was subsequently commuted to transportation for life, whereupon the condemned men protested that the commutation was *ultra vires* on the part of the Queen, and that they had a legal right to be "hanged, drawn, and quartered," or set free! The protest was of no avail, for Parliament quickly passed a special Act, empowering the Crown to commute sentences of high treason. Dillon, O'Gorman, and O'Doherty escaped to America. Duffy was thrice brought to trial, but his advocate, Mr. Butt, thrice baffled his prosecutors. Mr. Smith O'Brien and his companions were set free in Van Diemen's Land, on parole. Subsequently they were allowed to return home, but Mr. O'Brien died in retirement, never again taking part in public life. Hundreds of able and promising young men fled from the country, and Ireland suffered not only by the exile, enforced or voluntary, of the most public-spirited men in her governing middle class, but from the reaction and the prostration that always follow an abortive revolution.

Though the progress of the Revolutionary movement in England, Ireland, and France engrossed the interests of the Queen and Prince Albert, it was impossible for them to be indifferent to its progress in other countries, notably in Germany, where it took the form of a movement in favour of National Unity. Ferdinand I., a monarch weak alike in body and mind, at this time sat on the throne of Austria. He was, however, little better than the tool of Prince Metternich, the energetic and unscrupulous Minister in whom Absolutism was incarnate. After the fall of Louis Philippe, turbulent

* New Ireland, Sixth Edition, p. 91.

Viennese mobs demanded constitutional reforms in Austria. On the 13th of March, the populace sacked Metternich's Palace, in Vienna, and the Minister himself, disheartened on finding that his Imperial master shrank from defending his prerogatives, fled from the capital in disguise. "If emperors disappear, it is never till they have come to despair of themselves," was the mocking observation with which Metternich placed his resignation in the hands of the Archduke Charles. Hungary naturally caught the contagion of Liberty, and Louis



THE EXCHANGE AND FREDERICK'S BRIDGE, BERLIN.

Kossuth carried in the Diet at Pesth an address to the Emperor Ferdinand, demanding a national Government, from which the foreign—*i.e.*, the German—element was to be eliminated. Feeble efforts at repression in Vienna ended in the concession of a Free Press, a National Guard, and a Liberal Constitution for the Empire.

It almost seemed as if the Revolution of '48 had come to enforce the views which the Queen and Prince Albert had in vain impressed on their German relatives. Those views were to the effect that the time had arrived when the Princes of the Empire ought, as a matter of grace, to grant constitutional liberties to their subjects. But their Teutonic Majesties and Serenities had lost their chance of conceding by policy what Revolution now extorted from



THE KING OF PRUSSIA ADDRESSING THE BERLINERS. (See p. 346.)

them by force. The movement began in Baden, where, on the 29th of February, the Grand Duke was compelled to grant a Free Press, a National Guard, and Trial by Jury to his subjects. It spread fast through the minor States. In Munich it ended in the abdication of the King on the 21st of March. In the Odenwald the peasants sacked the baronial castles, and a servile war seemed imminent, even in Coburg. The Queen was therefore excited by every fresh outbreak, her only consolation being that Belgium—her uncle's kingdom—remained tranquil. The Prince Hohenlohe, the husband of her half-sister, and her half-brother, the Prince of Leiningen, were simply ruined. "All minds," writes the Princess Hohenlohe to the Queen, "are on the stretch. . . . Never was such a state of lawless vagabondage as there is now all over Germany, more or less. At all hours of the day young men are walking about the streets doing nothing." Business was at a standstill: there was neither buying nor selling, marrying nor giving in marriage; and the Queen's half-sister, in another letter, speaking of herself and her illustrious family, remarks, piteously:—"We are undone, and must begin a new existence of privations."

Prussia was stricken sharply by the revolutionary tempest. The very day after Metternich fled from Vienna the mob of Berlin rose against the Government. Riot after riot followed this outbreak, and the concessions proclaimed on the 18th of March came too late—though the King, Frederick William, imagined he would win the sympathies of the German race by advocating the formation of a United Germany, federated under one flag, one army, one law, and one executive. The people, full of joy at their triumph, went to the Palace to congratulate their Sovereign, who came forth to harangue them. A glimmer of steel, however, within the castle quadrangle in an instant transformed the loyal crowd into a raging and rebellious mob. "Bitter experience," says Mr. Charles Lowe,* "had taught them to distrust the word of their King. But instead of *retiring*, a squadron of dragoons, with a company of foot, *advanced* to clear the square; and either by accident or design, two muskets were fired into the crowd. 'Treason!' 'Revenge!' 'To arms!' was resounded on every side." Two hundred barricades rose in the streets as if by magic, "and the city was soon one wild scene of carnage," lit throughout the dark hours of night and morning by the red glare of sacked and burning houses. The troops virtually triumphed, but the King, grief-stricken, because of the slaughter of his "dear Berliners," suddenly gave the command next morning to "cease firing." The unpopular Ministers were dismissed. An amnesty was proclaimed, and the troops were ordered to quit the city. A Burger Guard was extemporised, and the King was compelled by the mob to stand bareheaded on the balcony of his Palace, and salute a ghastly procession of the dead who had been slain by his troops. On the 21st of March he rode through the streets, delivering many effusive and emotional speeches, promising a liberal constitution, and pledging himself, even in defiance of Austria, to head the movement for

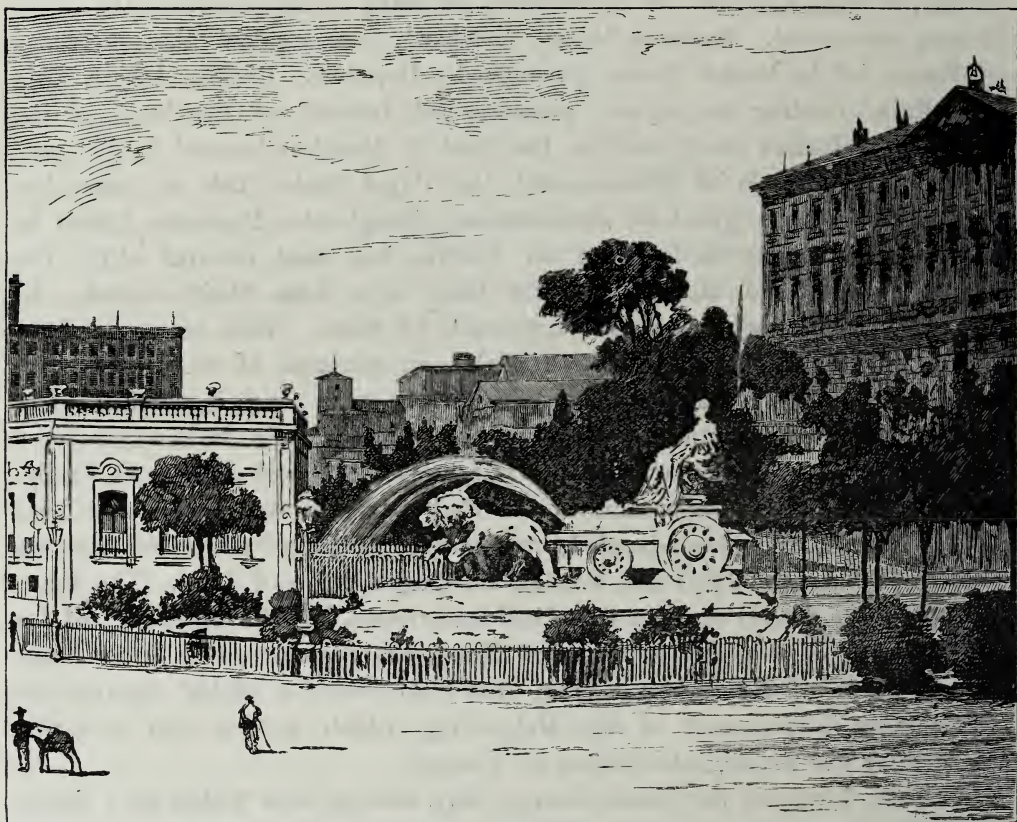
* Prince Bismarck: An Historical Biography, by Charles Lowe, M A., Vol. I., p. 63.

German Unity. The Crown Prince (afterwards Emperor William I.), who was wrongly supposed to have ordered the troops to fire on the people, fled to England, and his Palace was saved solely because some loyal person artfully chalked over it the words "National Property." He was most hospitably entertained by the Queen till the end of May, when he returned to Berlin. "May God protect him," writes her Majesty to her uncle, King Leopold. "He is very noble-minded and honest, and most cruelly wronged."

Italy, already a hotbed of discontent, naturally participated in the revolutionary movement. Early in March, Lombardy rose against the Austrians, and Venice, led by Daniel Manin, proclaimed a Republic. Charles Albert, King of Sardinia, yielding to popular pressure, put himself at the head of the agitation for Italian unity, and on the 23rd of March advanced to Milanese territory. The people of Tuscany and the Papal States flew to arms, but were pacified by the grant of constitutions, though the Pope was forced by the populace in May to levy war on Austria, his most faithful ally. The Dukes of Parma and Modena fled for their lives from their capitals. In Sicily alone the revolution was suppressed by force. This seems to have disheartened the liberators of North Italy—or, perhaps, it would be more correct to say it encouraged their Austrian masters. Ignoring defeat after defeat, the Austrians, under Radetsky, held on to their Italian provinces with grim tenacity. Pacific mediation was rejected on both sides, and, finally, Charles Albert, who by this time found that Sardinia was expected to bear the brunt of the war single-handed, was rendered helpless by his fatal reverses at Custoza (22nd of July) and Somma Campagna (26th of July). The Pope, alarmed by the liberal movement he had encouraged, lost the confidence of his subjects, and on the assassination of Rossi, his secretary, fled from Rome to Gaeta (24th of November). From thence he issued a protest against the Revolutionary Government of the Holy City, which protest was promptly supported by the armed intervention of France.

In Spain, however, the Revolution, in May, took a form which gave Queen Victoria the greatest anxiety. At first all parties in the Cortes were opposed to violence. Suddenly, however, the Party of Action waxed strong. The Government foolishly prorogued the Cortes, and this was followed by a protest in the shape of a popular rising in Madrid, on the 26th of March. It was suppressed, and a few of the most distinguished men in Spain were summarily banished beyond the seas. Lord Palmerston here interfered with characteristic recklessness and audacity. On the 16th of March he wrote to Sir Henry Bulwer, the British Minister at Madrid, requesting him to advise the Queen of Spain to change her Ministers. Sir Henry Bulwer not only sent a copy of this despatch to the Duc de Sotomayor, but also procured its publication in the Opposition newspapers. The Spanish Government, incensed at Sir H. Bulwer's intrigues with the Party of Violence, not only resented this impertinent interference with their affairs, but haughtily returned the despatch to the

English Foreign Office. Lord Palmerston replied sarcastically to Sotomayor, and not only approved of the conduct of Sir Henry Bulwer, but caused him to be made a K.C.B. Accordingly, on the 19th of May, the Spanish Government requested Sir Henry to leave Spain within forty-eight hours, which he did, and a cessation of diplomatic intercourse was the result. Lord John Russell, the Prime Minister, had seen Lord Palmerston's ill-advised despatch,



THE FOUNTAIN OF CYBELE, MADRID.

and having told Lord Palmerston that he objected to it, he naturally concluded it would not be sent. "Shortly after," writes Mr. Greville,* "he (Lord John Russell) was with the Queen, and, in conversation on this topic, he told her what had passed between Palmerston and himself, and what he had said. 'No! *did* you say that?' said the Queen. He said, 'Yes.' 'Well, then,' she replied, 'it produced no effect, for the despatch *is* gone. Lord Palmerston sent it to me. I *know* it is gone.'"

There was quite a storm of indignation against Lord Palmerston in every political club and *coterie* when this affair became known. The Queen was angry, and so were Palmerston's colleagues, some of whom declared that they

* Journal of the Reign of Queen Victoria, Vol. III., p. 169.

could not defend his conduct. He was attacked by the Opposition in both Houses; and Lord Lansdowne, who had to plead for him in the Lords, told Lord John Russell that "this must never happen again," and that in future Lord Palmerston must not be allowed to send out any despatches unless they



BARON STOCKMAR.

(Engraved, by permission, after the Portrait in Sir Theodore Martin's "Life of the Prince Consort.")

were sanctioned by Lord John himself.* It was morally certain that Sir H. Bulwer had, at Lord Palmerston's instigation, mixed himself up with the intrigues of the revolutionary party in Madrid, and on the 5th of June Mr. Banks gave expression to the true feeling of every section of the House of Commons, by moving a Vote of Censure on Lord Palmerston. Whigs, Tories, and Radicals were agreed that his conduct had been imprudent and discourteous. The Queen expressed to Lord John Russell her grief over his rude

* Greville's Journal of the Reign of Queen Victoria.

and untoward management of diplomatic business. His colleagues condemned him in private, and yet the attack on him mysteriously collapsed. The debate, says Mr. Greville, cynically, was a fight "with muffled gloves," and why? Palmerston, for whom the stars in their courses fought, was saved by two strokes of luck. Sir Robert Peel, whose defence of him was a piece of exquisite irony, decided that as the Ministry refused to desert him he must be supported, Peel's sole object at this time being to protect the only Ministerial combination which could protect Free Trade. The Spanish Government had also put themselves in the wrong in ordering Sir Henry Bulwer to quit Madrid, merely because Lord Palmerston sent them, through him, an insolent and foolish despatch. Members who were prepared to vote for Mr. Bankes's motion felt that unless it were proved clearly that Sir Henry Bulwer had participated in revolutionary conspiracies, they must vote for the Government, on the score of national honour. The Spanish Ministry failed to prove this, because they dared not set forth their case. One of Sir Henry Bulwer's instruments in driving the Narvaez Government from office was Serrano, who from corrupt motives revealed the conspiracy to Narvaez. But Serrano was the lover of the Queen of Spain, and had his evidence been adduced against Lord Palmerston, her Majesty would have been unpleasantly compromised. The debate on Mr. Bankes's motion was thus a Parliamentary victory for Lord Palmerston. But it served to augment the distrust with which the Queen and his own colleagues regarded his harum-scarum method of conducting the business of the Foreign Office.

Parliament, which had been adjourned over the Christmas holidays, again met on the 3rd of February, 1848. Meeting as it did on the eve of a revolution in Europe, and at a time when the masses of the English people were in a ferment of discontent, one might suppose that it was greatly agitated by the tempest of sedition that raged outside its walls. On the contrary, it pursued its course with almost stoical indifference to "the condition-of-England question," and neither the sullen temper of the English working classes, nor the impending revolt of the "Young Ireland" Party, seems to have given the representatives of the people the slightest concern. In fact, the West Indies now took the place of Ireland and the manufacturing districts of England, as a scene of distress worthy of monopolising the attention of Parliament. What Mr. Disraeli said of similar events in 1834 might well have been said of those of 1848, namely, that "the mean position which the Saxon multitude occupied as distinguished from the Jamaica planters sank deep into their hearts." Again the attention of the working classes was drawn to the contrast between the interest which Parliament displayed in "a petty and exhausted colony" and "the claims for constitutional rights by the working millions of England."* Oddly enough, it was Mr. Disraeli's own leader, Lord George Bentinck, who, finding that the planters attributed their sufferings to

* Sybil, or the Two Nations, by the Earl of Beaconsfield, Book V., Chap. I.

the loss of the protection which differential duties on foreign sugar had given them in the English market, took up their case at this inopportune moment with more warmth than prudence. He moved for and obtained the appointment of a Committee to inquire into their grievances. In June the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Charles Wood, brought forward a proposal to advance £200,000—ultimately the sum was fixed at £170,000—for the purpose of helping planters to get coolie labour. Lord John Russell subsequently announced further concessions. He refused to exclude slave-grown sugar from the English market. He, however, proposed to reduce the duty on colonial sugar, leaving ordinary foreign sugar at its existing rate. But he applied to both colonial sugar and certain varieties of foreign sugar a descending scale of reduction, which would in 1855 end in equalising them, though up to that period a slight advantage would be given to the colonial sugar. The philanthropists attacked the scheme because they demanded the total exclusion of slave-grown sugars. Some Free Traders like Mr. Hume attacked it, because they thought the true remedy lay in letting the colonists have more freedom in importing labour, and in managing their own affairs. A painful scene took place during these debates between Lord George Bentinck and Lord John Russell. Lord George declared in violent language that Mr. Hawes, Under-Secretary for the Colonies, had suppressed a despatch which threw light on colonial distress. Lord John Russell jeered at his antagonist's connection with the turf, where alone, he said, such tricks were common. Mr. Disraeli retorted by saying that for his services in detecting a turf fraud Lord George Bentinck had been thanked by a Committee, the chairman of which was the Duke of Bedford, Lord John Russell's brother. During this wrangling the House of Commons was converted into a bear-garden, and members roared and hooted at each other as if they were maniacs. The Government carried their proposal only by a majority of fifteen, and this, together with loss of prestige from bad management and clumsy Parliamentary tactics, further weakened the Cabinet in the eyes of the public. Even the Queen began to think she might soon have to send for Lord Stanley, for it was only Sir Robert Peel's support that kept the Administration alive.

The financial statement of the Government, which was made, not by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir C. Wood), but by Lord John Russell himself, early in the year, had been disappointing. He estimated a deficit of £2,141,209, and he said it must be met either by increasing taxation, or reducing the cost of the Army and Navy. But the agitation which had been raised by the Duke of Wellington about the defenceless state of the country drove the Ministry to increase the military and naval estimate by £358,000, in addition to which Lord John Russell decided to take a Militia vote of £150,000. He proposed, therefore, to continue the Income Tax, which was to expire in April, 1849, for five years, raising it from 7d. to 1s. in the pound. The duties on copper ore, equal to £41,000, were to be remitted, which

would leave a surplus of £113,000 on the Estimates. Never did a Budget raise such a storm of opposition. Were Ministers mad, asked Mr. Hume, that they proposed to increase taxation during a time of commercial distress and seething political discontent? He and Mr. Cobden demanded, like all the Radicals, a reduction of armaments to meet the estimated deficit on the Budget. All the Protectionists, of course, fell upon the Ministry, crying, "Behold the fatal results of Free Trade!" and demanding the substitution of indirect taxation, or import duties, instead of an increased Income Tax—a tax which, said they, they would never have permitted Sir Robert Peel to impose, had it had not been understood that it was to be only a temporary one. Sir Charles Wood in a few days offered to refer the Estimates to Select and Secret Committees, a proposition violently attacked, as tending to relieve Ministers of their constitutional responsibility, and permit Committees of the House to encroach on the true functions of the Executive. Then the country rose as one man against the Budget, and members were threatened with the loss of their seats if they voted for an increased Income Tax. On the 28th of February Sir Charles Wood accordingly brought in an amended Budget. He would continue the existing Income Tax for five, or, if the House decided, for three years; but for two years, to meet a deficit which he thought was temporary, he proposed to add 5 per cent. to it. This still further irritated the country, whose ideas on taxation the Government utterly ignored. The working classes scoffed at the House which fretted over the addition of sevenpence in the pound on the tax on their incomes, when *they* paid twice as many shillings in the pound on the great staples of their consumption. The middle classes complained that Ministers paid no heed to their demand that a distinction be made between permanent and precarious incomes, and for the adjustment of the tax to the means and substance of the taxpayer.

Meantime the Select Committee on the Estimates were reducing them. On the 25th of August Sir C. Wood stated to the House that the Committee had so adjusted revenue and expenditure that there would only be a deficit of £292,305 to meet. To that he had to add the extraordinary expenditure of the year, incurred on account of the Caffre War, together with sums for relieving fresh distress in Ireland, which brought the total deficit to be met to £2,031,226. This sum the Government proposed to borrow in the open market. After some protests from the Radicals against increasing the floating debt in time of peace, and against the refusal of the Government to reduce establishments, the Ministry carried their point. But the Cobdenites taunted them with Sir Robert Peel's remark, that he would not attempt to govern the country unless he could equalise its expenditure and its revenue.

Parliament in 1848 was tolerably free from discussions on the interminable Irish question. But Mr. Smith O'Brien, the leader of the Irish Party of Action, was in earnest, and his followers were full of enthusiasm for Irish nationality. Lord Clarendon had attempted to conciliate the priesthood,

but he had failed; and the Executive in Dublin sought for increased power to maintain order in Ireland. Hence a Bill aimed at seditious clubs was brought forward by the Government. It empowered the Lord-Lieutenant to arrest and detain any person whom he suspected of conspiring against the



SIR GEORGE GREY.

Queen's Government—in other words, it was proposed to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act.* The Bill passed rapidly through all its stages, even Radicals

* It is interesting to record that Lord Brougham, in the House of Lords on the 21st of July, 1848, read a letter in which the writer said that Mr. O'Connell had, in conversation, suggested, three weeks before Sir R. Peel's Coercion Act was passed, that a suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act would be preferable, as it "would cure and not irritate." Mr. O'Connell further stated that he would support Peel in pursuing that policy, provided the Minister would pledge himself to introduce the measures of relief and justice to Ireland which he had so often promised.

like Mr. Hume voting for it, reluctantly, as a hateful incident in our Irish policy. They, however, warned the Ministry that they must lose no time in bringing in remedial measures, dealing with the Franchise, the Church, the Grand Jury laws, and Municipal Institutions in Ireland. On the 26th of July the Bill was passed through the Upper House. A few days afterwards Mr. Sharman Crawford, previous to the House of Commons going into Committee of Supply, moved that the distracted condition of Ireland demanded the constant attention of Parliament, and said that if he carried his motion he would follow it up with one which Lord John Russell had moved in 1844, referring the subject of Irish grievances to a Select Committee. He complained of the delays in remedial legislation; but Lord John Russell, though conciliatory, opposed the motion on the plea that it would be better to proceed gradually with the work of reform in Ireland, than to burden the House with the impossible task Mr. Crawford would impose on it. It was in this debate that Mr. Bernal Osborne complained that Ireland was governed, like a Crown Colony, with "a mock Sovereign, a Brummagen Court, and a pinchbeck Executive," and recommended the abolition of the Viceroyalty, the government of Ireland by a fourth Secretary of State, occasional sessions of the British Parliament in Dublin, and an annual visit of the Queen and Court to her Irish dominions. Sir George Grey, the Home Secretary, also suggested that the Government would not be averse from modifying the position of the Established Church in Ireland, and there seemed to be in the minds of Ministers a disposition to seek, in a scheme of "concurrent endowment," a solution of the Irish problem. Mr. Crawford's motion was rejected by a vote of 100 to 24.

On the 24th of February the Lord Chancellor introduced the Irish Encumbered Estates Act. The measure provided for the swift and easy sale and transfer—voluntary or compulsory under an order of the Court of Chancery—of estates whose owners could not pay off their mortgages and had no capital to improve them. The mistake lay in selling along with the estates, which were the landlords', the improvements which, as a rule, were made by the tenants, and which in equity, and by the custom of land tenure in Ireland, belonged to the latter. The measure was therefore pregnant with evils which had to be dealt with subsequently by the Land Acts with which Mr. Gladstone's name will be permanently associated.

What was the effect of the Chartist rising on Parliament? It bulks but slightly in the proceedings of the Legislature. On the 10th of April Mr. Feargus O'Connor presented to the House of Commons a petition signed by 5,706,000 persons in favour of the "six points of the Charter"—namely, Vote by Ballot, Annual Parliaments, Manhood Suffrage, Equal Electoral Districts, Abolition of Property Qualification for Members of Parliament, and Payment of Members. He moved that it be read by the clerk. The first sheet was taken up and the prayer read, whereupon the messengers of the House

gathered up the five great masses of parchment of which the petition consisted, and rolled it to the table. On the 13th Mr. Thornley, on behalf of the Select Committee on Petitions, reported that the Chartist petition weighed not five tons, as was alleged, but $5\frac{3}{4}$ cwts., and that it contained only 1,975,496 signatures, and not 5,706,000, as Mr. O'Connor had stated. Among these appeared the names of the Queen as "Victoria Rex," the Duke of Wellington, K.G., Sir Robert Peel, and names that were no names, such as "No Cheese," "Pugnose," "Flatnose," and the like, so that doubts as to the authenticity of the document might be fairly raised. Mr. O'Connor and Mr. Cripps exchanged pungent personalities over this discovery, and when Mr. O'Connor left the House, the Speaker, fearing a duel might be the result of the quarrel, induced Mr. Cripps to withdraw his imputations on Mr. O'Connor's honesty. Lord John Russell then moved that Mr. O'Connor be arrested by the Sergeant-at-Arms. The offender, on being brought to the bar, gave explanations which brought the scene to an end.

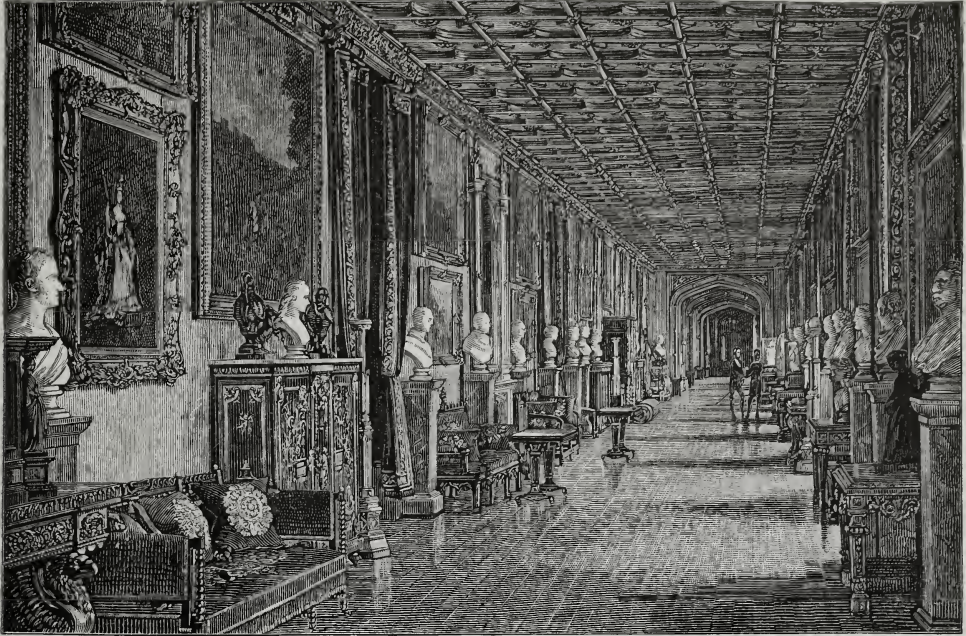
On the 7th of April Sir George Grey brought in the Crown Government Security Bill, which was a device of Lord Campbell's for reducing the offences created by the Act of 1796 from treason to felony, and for extending it to Ireland, where, as the law then stood, it was impossible to punish a revolutionary movement, except by treating it as treason or misdemeanour. This gave a deathblow to the odious statutory crime termed "constructive treason," substituting, as Lord Campbell says in his Journal, a plain, easy, popular method "by which *incipient* traitors may be prosecuted as *felons*, and transported beyond the seas." In one of the debates on this Bill, Mr. Smith O'Brien, while professing his loyalty to the Queen, declared he was not loyal to the Government or to the Imperial Parliament, and would do what he could to overthrow the one and dis sever the other. He lashed the House into fury by his references to his intrigues with the leaders of the French Revolution, and by menacing England with the hostility of the Republics of France and America. Campbell's Bill may be described as one to degrade "the spouters of state sedition," as Mr. Disraeli once called them, to the level of vulgar criminals in the eyes of the people. A Bill enabling the Home Secretary on his responsibility to compel the departure of aliens visiting the country not from the usual motives of business and pleasure was denounced by the Radicals, led by Sir W. Molesworth, as "analogous in principle to the famous law of Suspected Persons of the 17th of September, 1793, one of the most accursed laws of the Reign of Terror." Lord John Russell was taunted with having opposed a similar provision which disfigured the Aliens Act in his maiden speech in 1814, and Mr. David Urquhart amused the House by quoting Leviticus xxiv. 22 and Numbers ix. 14 against the proposal. It was, however, carried in both Houses.

It was felt at this time that the House of Commons was not equal to the task of social legislation. A large Party, under the leadership of Mr. Joseph

Hume, contended that the duty of Parliament to the people did not begin and end with the passing of repressive laws in a revolutionary crisis. But as the House was then constituted, they felt that little else could be expected from it, and they accordingly urged that it be made effective by being reformed. To bring the popular chamber into closer touch with the people, Mr. Hume and other Radical Reformers argued that the franchise must be extended. Hence arose his Resolution of the 20th of June, to the effect that the House of Commons did not fairly represent the people, and his proposal for (1) household franchise; (2) vote by ballot; (3) triennial Parliaments; (4) equal apportionment of Members to population. This motion marks the beginning of the great Reform movement which culminated in the Reform Bill of the Derby-Disraeli Government in 1867, and of Mr. Gladstone's Government in 1885. Lord John Russell opposed the Resolution, though he abandoned the doctrine with which he was credited, namely, that the Bill of 1832 was final, and he admitted that it had worked badly, by enforcing too great uniformity of qualification. Mr. Disraeli opposed every one of Mr. Hume's proposals, except that for triennial Parliaments. Mr. Sidney Herbert, on behalf of the Peelites, also opposed Mr. Hume, who was supported solely by Mr. Cobden, the Radicals, and the "Manchester School." The Resolution was rejected by a vote of 351 to 84.



FROM AN ETCHING BY THE QUEEN.



THE SOUTH-EAST CORRIDOR, WINDSOR CASTLE.

(After a Photograph by Messrs. G. W. Wilson and Co.)

CHAPTER XIX.

AT WORK AND PLAY.

The Queen's Administrative Work—The "Condition of England" Question—The Court and the Working Classes—Royal Plans for Ameliorating the Lot of Labour—Threatened Attacks on the Queen—The Demagogues Abashed—A Royal-Hearted Speech—The Queen's Private Correspondence—A Pension Fund for the Working Classes—Pauperism among Domestic Servants—Prince Albert's Relief Plan—The Court at Osborne—Birth and Christening of the Princess Louise—Removal to Balmoral—The Queen at Kirk—A Royal Geologist—Sir Charles Lyell's Anecdotes of the Royal Family—An Accident in the Solent—Prince Albert as a University Reformer—Death of Lord Melbourne and Lord George Bentinck.

To the Queen and the Prince Consort the year of the Revolution brought many domestic anxieties which the Court newsman of the day could not chronicle. We have seen, from some expressions in her Majesty's own letters, how sharply her heart was touched by the misfortunes of her French friends and her German kinsfolk. But the public business connected with the distressing and alarming state of affairs abroad condemned both the Queen and her husband to the severest toil. Twenty-eight thousand despatches were received by or sent out from the Foreign Office during 1848, and most of these had to be studied closely, and annotated and advised on either by her Majesty or Prince Albert. Lord Palmerston's irrepressible restlessness and boyish imprudence kept the Queen in a state of feverish anxiety, for she never knew

when some fresh freak of the Foreign Secretary might not make her appear ridiculous to Continental Courts.

Moreover, it occurred to the Royal pair that the troubles at home might perchance be smoothed if the influence of the Crown were judiciously and delicately applied to promote a peaceful solution of many alarming social problems. Mr. Carlyle was then thundering forth anathemas against the governing orders of England for neglecting what he called "the Condition of England Question," and accusing them of abdicating their natural position as leaders and guides of the people. Had he suspected what was going on in the Royal circle, he would have known that this charge did not at all events lie against the highest of all the governing orders in the State. The "Condition of England Question," in fact, had now become a subject of engrossing interest to the Queen and her consort.

Prince Albert's letters to Baron Stockmar indicate that he over-estimated the power and significance of the Chartist organisation. But they show that he did not under-estimate the disastrous effect of popular discontent on the commerce and industry of the nation. Her Majesty and the Prince seemed to have arrived at a very clear idea as to how far they could either of them affect the crisis. Personally, the Sovereign at such a time could not with propriety mingle in the social warfare waged between rich and poor. But much might be done through Prince Albert to show that the Crown was not unmindful of the claims of Labour, and to indicate that her Majesty bated not one jot or tittle of her sympathy for that class of our community, which, as Prince Albert pithily said, in a speech he delivered on the 18th of May, "has most of the toil, and least of the enjoyments, of life."

As far back as 1844 he had become President of a Society for the Improvement of the Condition of the Working Classes. This apparently was an organisation somewhat of the dilettante type, but it now occurred to the practical mind of the Prince that it might be turned at such a crisis to a useful purpose. He seized the opportunity afforded by an invitation to preside at one of its public meetings, for carrying out the cherished design of the Court, and it is curious to note that when this intention was bruited about, the strongest objections were made to it. Violent demagogues, he was told, would attend and say rude things about the Sovereign. Lord John Russell sent him a copy of a book containing a ribald attack on the Royal Family; and it is not pleasing to recollect that if the Court had permitted itself to be overruled by the Government, this golden chance of conciliating contending classes would have been lost at a critical moment in the history of the English people. But neither the Queen nor the Prince was to be daunted. These attacks, they said, merely convinced them all the more that the time had come when they should put themselves in touch with the great interests of Labour, and show that the Royal Family was not, as was alleged, living on the earnings of a people, for whose sufferings it had no sympathy, and to whose welfare it was indifferent.

What the Prince called "a tangible proof" of the desire of the Queen and her family to co-operate in any scheme for lightening and brightening the lot of her poorer subjects was needed, and he meant to give that proof.

A sour critic would perhaps say that in analysing the Royal ideas on the "Condition of England" Question a good deal of State Socialism lurked in them. They suggest undoubtedly the influence of many German writers on State Socialism; but Prince Albert, so far as he was the exponent of her Majesty's thoughts, seems to have been careful to burn much incense on the altar of Voluntarism, before which all the prominent economic writers of the day bowed down. If he roused their suspicions by denying that the people should be let alone, and left to help themselves in what Mr. Carlyle calls "the desolate freedom of the wild ass," he deferred to their prejudices by proposing that the help and guidance which they needed should come not from Government, but from voluntary combinations of individuals. It is possible that he might have gone farther if he had dared. As it was, the position of the Court in relation to the social question at this time seems to have been midway between that of the younger school of sociologists in our day, and the almost defunct school whose principle and shibboleth were *laissez faire*.

According to the Prince's speech at the meeting of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Working Classes, on the 18th of May, two objects should be kept in view. Firstly, Society, through individual and associated effort, should show what *can* be done by model lodging-houses, improved dwellings, loan funds, allotments, and the like, to ameliorate the lot of the poor. Secondly, the poor must be taught that all the work of amelioration cannot be done by Society—that, in fact, they must, by their cultivation of the homely virtues of thrift, honesty, diligence, and self-denial, help themselves into the condition in which it is possible for others, either by individual or associated effort, to help them. He implored the country to think more of the identity than the rivalry of class interests, and contended that it was the imperative duty of the rich, each one in his sphere, "to show how man can help man, notwithstanding the complicated state of Society." Self-reliance in the individual, and confidence between individuals—these were the moral forces which Prince Albert seems to have thought it was the mission of all good citizens to evoke. It has been hinted that such utterances are mere platitudes, and hardly worth recording. As David Hume observed, the truths that are prized as discoveries by a few philosophers in one generation become the commonplaces of their grandchildren. Had the ideas of the Queen and her husband on the Social Problem been platitudes among statesmen in 1848, Revolution would not have fallen on Europe like "a bolt out of the blue," nor would the panic-stricken kings and princes of the Continent have been flying, as Mr. Carlyle put it, "like a gang of coiners when the police had come among them."* Nothing could be more gratifying

* Thomas Carlyle, by J. A. Froude, Vol. I., p. 248.

to the Queen than the universal approval that greeted this address. It struck the true note of sympathy with Labour that should ever ring through "the sad, sweet music of Humanity." Her Majesty said, in a letter to Stockmar, "the Prince made a speech on Thursday which has met with more general admiration from all classes and parties than any I can remember;" and it



THOMAS CARLYLE. (*After the Medallion by T. Woolner, 1855.*)

is in truth impossible to give a juster idea of the effect which it produced all over the English-speaking world.

It is curious to observe that all through the Queen's correspondence during the most alarming year of her reign, there is expressed a feeling of proud confidence in the stability of the British Monarchy, and an abiding certitude that under her rule no effort will be spared to minimise the sufferings or better the lot of the poor. Bolingbroke's "patriot King" could not have more completely identified Sovereignty with national life and national yearning. That the Revolution had no perceptible effect on England, one can now see was mainly due to the fact that alike in the repeal of the Corn Laws, and in the encouragement of schemes for social improvement, the Monarchy



CHRISTENING OF THE PRINCESS LOUISE IN BUCKINGHAM PALACE CHAPEL.

became almost guilty of partisanship in espousing the popular cause. The air was indeed full of such schemes, and it is hardly a breach of confidence now to say that but for the risk of incurring the reproach of infecting England with German ideas, the Court would have marched in advance of its advisers. It was generally believed at this time that the Queen and Prince Albert were first struck with the inadequacy of the provision made in England to mitigate the painful chancefulness of life among the artisan classes. It has been, in fact, supposed that it was in a special sense for her Majesty's perusal that the late Dr. Farr then investigated the problem, from a point of view which was as essentially German as it was antagonistic to the ideas of the English *laissez faire* school. Our Poor Law, Dr. Farr argued, is really a great scheme for insuring every man's life against the risk of starvation. In those days to die from starvation was an accident in England. In the countries which were swept by the Revolution, however, to be succoured from death by starvation was the accident. The Poor Law had, therefore, with other influences, saved Society in England. Whether, in these circumstances, it might not be well to develop the beneficent idea underlying it, was a question often thoughtfully pondered in the Royal Family.

For this reason it may not be amiss to call attention to what Dr. Farr laid down for the guidance of those who at this anxious time had the destinies of the people in their hands. He pointed out that "Society without a legal system of relief for destitution can be scarcely said to exist, as it leaves the protection of life against the most imminent calamity unprovided for."* Insecurity of life among the masses, he contended, naturally weakens their instinctive conservatism. It drives them into communism and anarchy, which are the rank and unwholesome outgrowths of a state in which Property is too selfish to appropriate a small portion of its profits as a life insurance premium for Labour—and where the State has not yet discovered that the insurance of the life of all is the insurance of the property of all. The Poor Law to a certain extent made this appropriation. But the objection to it was its cast-iron administration; its indiscriminating application to the good and the bad, the industrious and the idle, the worthy and the worthless. Was it not, then, possible to make Poor Law Relief bear some proportion to the ratepayer's previous contributions to the Insurance fund against destitution? Could not the whole country be converted into a gigantic Friendly Society, of which the rich should be, so to speak, honorary members, but capable without the least shame or humiliation of becoming benefiting members, should sudden misfortune hurl them from the heights of opulence to the depths of destitution? Many philanthropic firms of employers co-operated at this time with their workmen in founding benefit societies for the purpose of insurance against sickness or accident. Why, it was asked, could they not develop this idea, and insure

* Letter to the Registrar-General on Health Insurance, by William Farr, Esq. Appendix to the Registrar-General's Report for 1849.

their workpeople against the consequences of that infirmity which is the result of old age? In other words, could not the Friendly Society be also made a Pension Club? The practical difficulty obviously lay in the complicated account-keeping which was necessary for the success of such schemes, and which private firms could hardly be expected to undertake. It was, however, shown by Dr. Farr, in the letter which has been quoted, and which is one of the most curious and characteristic products of a time of social turmoil, that the Government could alone with advantage receive small deposits of money in the early life of a generation, invest them at compound interest, and pay the accumulated amounts at short intervals to the aged and infirm survivors. Each establishment might, according to Dr. Farr's idea, organise three insurance funds—a Pension Fund, a Health Fund, and a Life Fund—the premiums to be paid to the Government, who should conduct the whole business for the parties interested on fair and easy terms.

It is curious that though the Chartists and a large number of the Tories—notably the remnants of the “Young England” Party, led by Mr. Disraeli and Lord John Manners—sympathised with these ideas, they were coldly frowned down by the Whigs and the Manchester School of Radicals. The argument against the social reformers was that employers did enough for their “hands” when they bought their labour and paid for it in the open market. It was for the workpeople to spend their money as they pleased—if in insurance against sickness and old age, so much the better; if not, so much the worse. But even in the last case no real harm, it was urged, could come to them, for there was always “the parish” to fall back upon. In a word, Capital argued that it did enough for Labour when it paid wages and poor rates. On the other hand, it might be retorted, that by helping on schemes for promoting the permanent comfort of his workpeople the employer is only paying wages in the way which pays all parties best in the long-run. Such an employer, it might be said, gets the strongest command of the labour market, and the best and most efficient service from his men. His prestige becomes lustrous like that of a general who refuses to desert his wounded on the field where he wins his victorious laurels, or of a conquering king who refuses to let the veterans perish, whose valour has widened the range of his dominion. Often did the Queen and Prince Albert ponder these things in their hearts. Hence their eagerness to seize every opportunity, not of pressing schemes such as these on a Society whose economic prejudices were antipathetic to them, but for stimulating the upper and middle classes in such voluntary movements for ameliorating the lot of Labour, as were possible and practicable in these “bad old times.” It was in this spirit that they even studied the barren statistics of Pauperism, and that their discovery, in 1849, of the fact that the great majority of the poor people in London work-houses had been domestic servants, prompted Prince Albert to stimulate the Servants’ Provident and Benevolent Society to find a remedy for such a

distressing state of things. "The appalling pauperism of this class," as the Prince described it in a memorable speech, he strove to arrest by inducing servants to invest their savings under the Deferred Annuities Act, through the agency of the Society.*

On the 18th of March the Princess Louise was born, and on the 13th of May she was baptised in the private chapel of Buckingham Palace, being



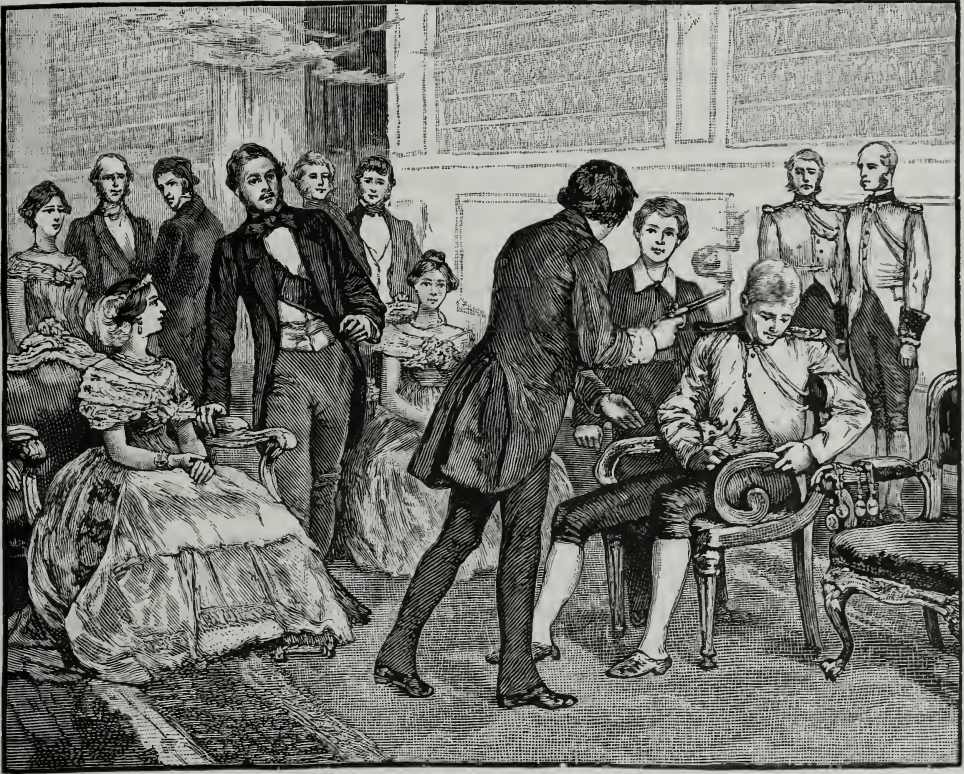
VIEW IN LOCHNAGAR.

named after Prince Albert's mother and the Queen of the Belgians. The Prince himself adapted the music of a chorale he had composed for the Baptismal Service. "The Royal christening," writes Bishop Wilberforce to Miss Noel, "was a very beautiful sight in its highest sense of that word beauty; the Queen, with the five Royal children around her, the Prince of Wales and Princess Royal hand-in-hand, all kneeling down quietly and meekly at every prayer, and the little Princess Helena alone *just* standing and looking round with the blue eyes of gazing innocence." This was the little Princess a peep at whom, Lady Lyttelton says, always cheered her, for she was then "an image of life"—it is to be presumed Lady Lyttelton means child-life—in its prime, with "cheeks like full-blown roses, and her nose like

* Prince Consort's Speeches.

a bud." This month of May was ostensibly a merry one at Court, though from the correspondence that passed between the Queen and her half-sister, it is quite evident that her Majesty went through the festal pageant of Court balls and Royal birthday fêtes with her heart heavy from the anxieties of the times.

In July the Royal circle was broken up by the departure of Prince



PROFESSOR ANDERSON AT BALMORAL.

Albert to open the great Agricultural Show at York, where his speech, identifying himself closely with the farming interest, gave the country gentry and husbandmen of England the keenest delight. The Queen again wrote to Stockmar and the King of the Belgians, expressing her personal satisfaction with the Prince's speeches at York, and her pleasure at seeing him develop high gifts of oratory. The rest of the summer her Majesty and her family spent at Osborne—a little anxious on account of the feeble health of Prince Alfred (Duke of Edinburgh), whose removal to the keen mountain air of the Highlands had been strongly pressed on them by Sir James Clark. Her Majesty then came to town on the 5th of September to prorogue Parliament. The present House of Lords was on that occasion used for the first time, and this fact, together with the interest excited by the appearance before her

Senate of almost the only great European Sovereign who at this time dared appear in public, caused enormous crowds to assemble. The Queen was received by the mob who lined the route from Buckingham Palace to Westminster in a delirium of enthusiastic loyalty, and that she felt grateful for their greeting was evident from the emotion with which she delivered those passages of her Address, in which she referred to the mutual affection and trust that linked Queen and country together in England.

No sooner had this function been discharged than the Royal Family made haste to proceed to the Aberdeenshire Highlands, where, on the recommendation of Sir James Clark, Prince Albert had leased the Balmoral estate from the Earl of Aberdeen. Mountain air, at once dry and keen, was, in Clark's opinion, essential for the health of the Royal Family, and Balmoral was the driest place in Deeside. Nobody has described this romantic retreat better than the Queen herself. From the hill above the house the view, she says, is charming. "To the left you look to the beautiful hills surrounding *Lochnagar*, and to the right towards Ballater, to the glen or valley along which the Dee winds, with beautiful wooded hills, which reminded us very much of the Thuringian Forest. It was so calm and so solitary, it did one good as one gazed around, and the pure mountain air was most refreshing. All seemed to breathe freedom and peace, and to make one forget the world and its sad turmoils. The scenery is wild and yet not desolate; and everything looks much more prosperous and cultivated than at Laggan."*

The journey northward was made by sea to Aberdeen, and from thence to Balmoral her Majesty met at every stage of the road with the warmest of Highland welcomes. Balmoral has changed much since those days, when it was the loveliest of mountain solitudes. The little whitewashed castle, with its pepper-box turrets, reminded one of the feats of those old Scottish architects who flourished at the period when the baronial wars had ceased, but when the builders had not learnt to adapt their art to peaceful or domestic purposes. It was not till after the fee-simple of the property was bought by the Prince in 1852, that it became transformed and transfigured by "improvements." The Queen devoted herself to holiday-making after the free and informal fashion that made desolate *Ardverikie* a terrestrial Paradise. Her winning ways charmed the cottagers and the peasantry, to whom she soon became a veritable Lady Bountiful. As for Prince Albert, sport lightened the anxieties of politics. The vast panorama of mountain, glen, and forest which unfolds itself from the summit of dark *Lochnagar* invited him to resume the geological studies which in his youth he had pursued with ardour, and the greatest modern master of the science, Mr. (afterwards Sir Charles) Lyell,† was his guest and guide. A pleasing and graphic sketch is given by Sir Charles Lyell of the Royal Family in their Highland home. "At Balmoral,

* Leaves from her Majesty's Journal, 8th of September, 1848.

† Lyell was knighted during this visit to Balmoral.

the day I went to dine there," he writes, "Saturday last, I had first a long walk—Sir James Clark and I—with Mr. Birch and his pupil,* a pleasing, lively boy, whose animated description of the Conjuror, or 'Wizard of the North,'† whom they had seen a few days before, was very amusing. 'He (the Wizard) had cut to pieces mamma's pocket-handkerchief, then darned it and ironed it, so that it was as entire as ever; he had fired a pistol and caused five or six watches to go through Gibb's (one of their footmen) head, and all were tied to a chair on Gibb's other side,' and so forth; 'but papa (Prince Albert) knows how all these things are done, and had the watches really gone through Gibb's head he would hardly have looked so well, though he was confounded.' Sometimes I walked alone with the child, who asked me the names of plants, and to let him see spiders, &c., through my magnifying-glass; sometimes with the tutor, whom I continue to like the more as I become better acquainted. After our ramble of two hours and a half through some wild scenery, I was sent for to join another party; where I found the Queen, Prince, and Lord John by a deep pool on the river Dee, fishing for trout and salmon. After the Queen had entered the Castle the Prince kept me so long, and we kept one another so late, talking on all kinds of subjects, that a messenger came from her Majesty, saying it was only a quarter of an hour to dinner-time. After the ladies had gone to the drawing-room we had much lively talk, which the Prince promoted greatly, telling some amusing stories himself, and encouraging others by laughing at theirs. Next day I went to church. The prayer for the parish magistracy, Queen, and Royal Family, judges, ministers of religion, Parliament, and the whole nation, was just such as you would have liked, and in excellent taste, with nothing which a Republican, jealous of equality, could, I think, have objected to, and which, I believe, our Sovereign and her husband could thoroughly appreciate the simplicity of. They shoved the box,‡ on the end of a long pole, to the Queen and Prince, and maids of honour, as to all the rest of the congregation, and each dropped in their piece of coin. After church I had much conversation alone with Prince Albert, whose mind is in full activity on a variety of grave subjects, while he is invigorating his body with field sports." Lyell, who was a very observant man, and an astute judge of character, conceived a very high opinion of the Prince from his conversations with him. After his death, according to Sir Theodore Martin, he wrote a long letter to Mr. John Murray, criticising the Prince's abilities, and expressing his hope that justice would be done to him in an *éloge* in the *Quarterly*.

On the 28th of October the Queen and her retinue left Balmoral for Osborne. On the 9th they left Osborne for London, and when crossing the Solent they

* H.R.H. the Prince of Wales.

† Professor Anderson's entertainment is evidently referred to here.

‡ The "ladle" in which the offertory is collected in Scottish parish churches is passed round each pew by an "elder" of the Kirk.

saw a boat full of women who had relatives on board the *Grampus* frigate, then coming into Portsmouth after a cruise in the Pacific, capsized in a squall. Prince Albert gave the alarm, and the Queen writes:—"I rushed out of the pavilion, and saw a man sitting on something which proved to be the keel of a boat. The next moment Albert called out in a horrified voice, 'Oh, dear, there are more!' which quite overcame me." Her Majesty stopped her yacht at once. A boat was lowered, and three women—one still alive—were

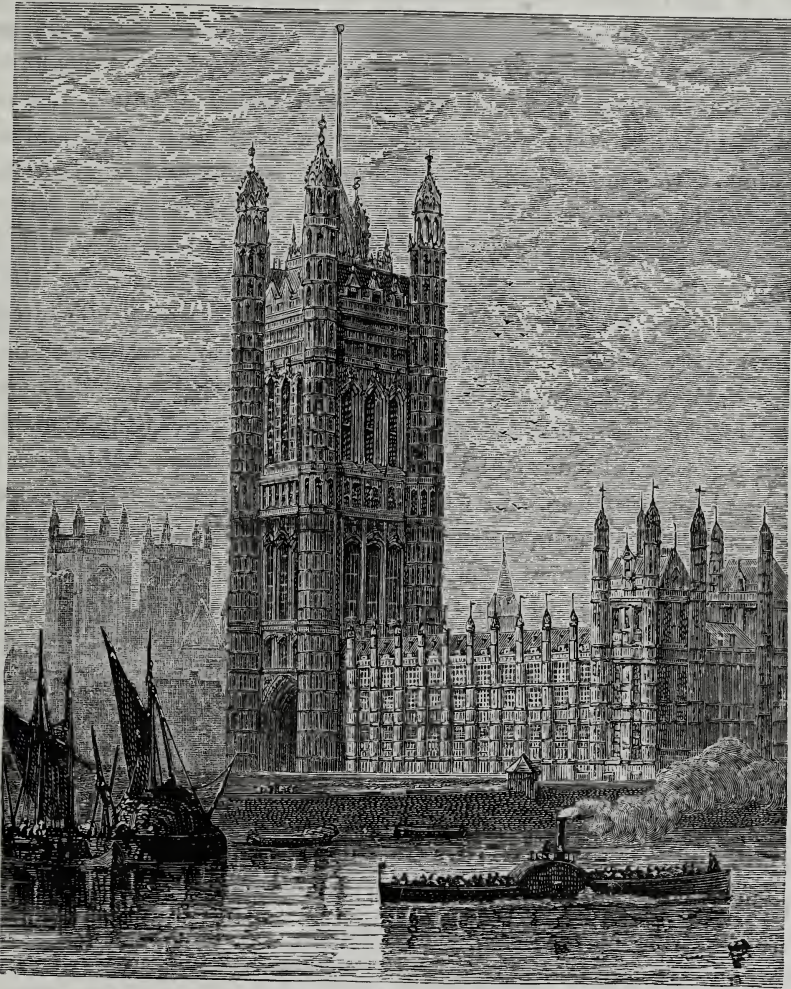


THE OLD BRIDGE, INVERCAULD.

rescued. But the sea ran so heavily that Lord Adolphus Fitzclarence refused to let the yacht lie to any longer, and the Queen had to yield to his determination to proceed without waiting for the return of the boat. "It was," she writes, "a dreadful moment too horrible to describe. . . . It is a terrible thing, and haunts me continually."

One more triumph over insular prejudice won by the Court during the year of Revolution remains to be recorded. Prince Albert, very soon after his election as Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, alarmed the Colleges by indicating that he had no intention of being merely an ornamental official. His first demand to be supplied with a sketch of the plan of academic study at Cambridge was ominous of interference. At Cambridge everything was at this time sacrificed to mathematical studies, and an idea of the state of mind in

which University reformers approached the Prince with suggestions may be found in Dr. Whewell's liberal proposal, that a century should pass before new discoveries could be admitted into the academic curriculum. Nominally philosophy, literature, and science were included in that curriculum, as the



THE VICTORIA TOWER, WESTMINSTER PALACE.

table of studies prepared by Dr. Philpott for the Prince showed. But there was no denying the truth of his Royal Highness's trenchant criticism on this document in his letter to Lord John Russell, in which he said that all the activity in these departments was "on paper," and even if it had been real, the scheme was incomplete. After a long and laborious correspondence with the best authorities on the subject, the Prince succeeded in persuading the University to thoroughly modernise its course of instruction, and his revised plan of studies was triumphantly carried on the 1st of November, 1848. As

Punch in a clever cartoon put it, H.R.H. Field-Marshal Chancellor Prince Albert took the *pons asinorum* after the manner of Napoleon at Arcola.

As winter drew on, the state of Ireland became increasingly distressful, and the confusion on the Continent more and more ominous. In England some faint signs of reviving trade were discernible, but only just discernible. The death of Lord Melbourne, however, on the 24th of November, painfully affected the Queen, whose affection for her first guide in statecraft had never abated. "Truly and sincerely," she writes in her Diary, "do I deplore the loss of one who was a most kind and disinterested friend of mine, and most sincerely attached to me. He was indeed for the first two years and a half of my reign almost the only friend I had, except Stockmar and Lehzen." Her last letter to the aged Minister, expressed in terms of simple but touching solicitude, according to his sister, Lady Palmerston, did much to lift from his wearied spirit the cloud of melancholy that had settled on it. Melbourne's character was rather misunderstood, for his whole life was a conceited protest against affectation. He was one of those who get great amusement out of life by treating it as a comedy, in which even in withered age they persist in playing the rôle of the *jeune premier*. He toiled hard to persuade Society that he was an elegant idler, and masked his vaulting ambition under the guise of a cynical indifference to worldly pomp and power. His tastes were a little coarse—otherwise his imposture would have been complete, and he would have perhaps realised the "grandly simple ideal" of a perfect aristocratic character, which the Earl of March imputed to George Selwyn. Melbourne's first impulse was usually to frivolity. But when he saw that business must be attended to, no man could work harder or bring to bear on affairs of State a keener intellect, a more astute judgment, or a craftier scheme of strategy. His handsome person and his charm of manner rendered him in his old age a *persona grata* at the Court of the Queen, who treated him with filial affection and respect. In him one often fancied the characters of Walpole and Bolingbroke met in combination, and there is a passage in his speech on the Indemnity Bill (11th of March, 1818) which may be cited as strangely appropriate to his career. It is that in which, after expatiating on the advantages which a soldier has whose exploits are performed in the light of day, before his comrades and his foes, and so publicly, that his valour and his virtues cannot be denied or disputed before a world in which they receive bold advertisement, he proceeds to show that it is far otherwise with the politician. "Not so the services of the Minister," exclaimed Melbourne, with a little sub-acid cynicism; "they lie not so much in acting in great crises, as in preventing those crises from arising; therefore they are often obscure and unknown, subject to every species of misrepresentation, and effected amidst obloquy, attack, and condemnation, whilst in reality—entitled to the approbation and gratitude of the country—how frequently are such services lost in the tranquillity which they have been

the means of preserving, and amidst the prosperity which they have themselves created."

Another stout political chieftain had passed away on the 21st of September, when Lord George Bentinck died suddenly of heart disease. His leadership of the Protectionists had latterly been imprudent and unpopular, and he had indeed thrown it up during the Session, when it was no longer possible to conceal the dissatisfaction which it created among his followers. Lord George Bentinck was an able man, but like Achilles, "*iracundus, inexorabilis, acer.*" Discredit has recently been cast on his career on the turf, which too late in life he deserted for politics. His indignation at "being sold," as he phrased it, when Peel abandoned Protection, flung him headlong into the civil strife of the times, with all his prejudices thick upon him, and with a mind ill-equipped by study or training for political controversy or the practice of statecraft. Fury and rancour, and a strange confusion of mind in marshalling his arguments, marked his harangues, and in strategy his impulsiveness and his arrogance often led him into serious errors. Yet he was popular on the whole in the House of Commons, for he was a man of dauntless courage, and was supposed to be guided by honesty of purpose in defending the interests of his order. If he had not been a little too much given to trumpeting his personal integrity, his zeal and self-sacrifice would have been better appreciated by his contemporaries, who till his death did him less than justice.

CHAPTER XX.

DISCONTENTED DEPENDENCIES.

Reaction in England in 1849—Attacks in Parliament on the Queen's Speech—Gagging Parliament—The Last Dying Struggle of the Protectionists—Repeal of the Navigation Laws—The Tory Attack on the Bishops—Protectionist Plans for Reducing Local Taxation—Coercion for Ireland—Peel's Generosity to the Whigs Explained—Irish Mendicity and English Grants in Aid—A Policy of Pauperism and Doles—Small Minds in a Great Crisis—Peel's Comprehensive Plan for Relieving Ireland—The Break-down of the Poor Law—The Queen and the Irish Landlords—Prince Albert's Project for Reforming the Irish Poor Rate—Scandals at the Colonial Office—Ceylon—Demerara and Canada—The Loyal Rebels of Canada—Riots in Montreal—Attacks on Lord Elgin—An Examination and Defence of his Policy—The Test of Results—"Be Just and Fear Not."

WHEN Parliament met on the 2nd of February, 1849, the condition of England may be described as negatively good. It was not prosperous. It was not prostrate. The commercial and manufacturing interests were rallying, but had not yet recovered from the blows of panic in 1847 and revolution in 1848. The small investors were uneasy about the management of the great railway enterprises which had absorbed their savings. The landed gentry were in a state of feverish apprehension as to the effect of Sir Robert Peel's fiscal

policy, which would come into full operation in 1849. Ireland was still a distressful country—the Poor Law having inflicted a severe blow on Property, without at the same time relieving Pauperism. More legislation, it was felt, was needed to succour the starving Irish, and the sullen discontent of the people, which followed the suppressed rebellion, irritated Englishmen and put the House of Commons in the worst possible temper for initiating remedial



DEMONSTRATION OF SAILORS IN FAVOUR OF THE NAVIGATION LAWS.

legislation for Ireland. But the Party of Violence in England and Scotland was effectually crushed, and though some sympathy was felt for its misguided leaders, yet everybody rejoiced that the cause of Social Order had triumphed in 1848, and that 1849 found England profoundly tranquil.

The Queen's Speech referred to the disturbances on the Continent, and to the steps which the British Government, in conjunction with France, had taken to produce a permanent settlement of affairs in Sicily. It touched on the recrudescence of rebellion in the Punjab, suggested a modification in the Navigation Laws, congratulated the country on escaping the shock of revolution, and on signs of returning prosperity. It pointed to an amendment of the Irish Poor Law, and closed with a proud allusion to the devotion of the English people in maintaining the great institutions of their country

“during a period of commercial difficulty, deficient production of food, and political revolution.”

Naturally the country Party attacked those portions of the Speech which implied approval of Sir Robert Peel's Free Trade policy. In both Houses the arguments were that the Government exaggerated the prosperity of the country, that their foreign policy had left them without allies, that the outlook



THE EARL OF CLARENDON, LORD-LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND.

abroad in Ireland and in India was troublous, and did not justify the large reductions in the estimates which were foreshadowed. The Irish Party in the House of Commons scoffed at the Royal allusions to Ireland, and contended that the insurrection which had been suppressed was a sham one, “got up,” said Mr. Grattan, “to put down Repeal.” Radicals like Mr. Hume attacked the Colonial policy of the Government, and clamoured for the removal of Lord Grey from the Colonial Office, because of certain arbitrary proceedings which he had sanctioned in British Guiana and Ceylon. It was felt that the real object of the Opposition was to inveigle Parliament into giving a hostile vote against Free Trade and the Repeal of the Corn Laws, one paragraph in the Amendment to the Address affirming that the worst Protectionist predictions had been verified. It was also admitted that

the policy of the Government had been right in its aim, which was to keep the country out of war, and that this had been attained, in spite of Lord Palmerston's turbulent methods of diplomacy. The Amendment to the Address was rejected only by a majority of two in the House of Lords, but in the House of Commons Mr. Disraeli was fain to withdraw it. On the 3rd of February, when the Address to the Crown was adopted, Lord John Russell proposed and carried certain Resolutions for facilitating the despatch of public business—to wit, that Bills be read a first time without debate, that when a Bill in Committee was ordered by the House to be taken up again on a particular day, then when that day came the Speaker should leave the Chair without putting any question, and let the House go into Committee without delay; that the amendments on a Bill, reported from Committee of the whole House, should be received without debate. Mr. Milner Gibson vainly endeavoured to induce the House to add another resolution limiting speakers to one hour each, with an exception in favour of Members introducing Bills and Ministers of the Crown replying to attacks. Lord John Russell gave some faint signs of sympathising with this restriction on Parliamentary garrulity, and Mr. Cobden supported the proposal vehemently. But Sir Robert Peel carried the House against it, and Mr. Gibson's motion was accordingly lost by a vote of 96 to 64.

In the Session of 1848 Ministers were unable to apply their Free Trade policy to the Shipping Trade, owing to Protectionist obstruction. On the 14th of February, 1849, they, however, proposed to repeal the Navigation Laws, which restricted "the free carriage of goods by sea to and from the United Kingdom and the British Possessions abroad." Power, however, was reserved to the Queen to re-enact the restrictive laws against countries that adopted a commercial policy hostile to British interests. The monopoly of the coasting trade, however, was not completely abandoned. The President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Labouchere, did not venture to propose that foreign ships might trade from port to port as freely as our own. All he said was, that a foreign ship sailing from a British port might in the course of her voyage to foreign parts touch at and trade freely in British ports *en route*. The Resolution was carried, and a Bill founded on it was brought in on the 9th of March, when it was vigorously opposed by Mr. Herries. The case of the monopolists was sadly damaged by Mr. Gladstone, who showed that with every relaxation of restrictions the English Shipping Trade had increased. The fact was, however, that the question was felt to be no longer arguable. The Navigation Laws were meant to protect the monopoly of English shipowners. Having stripped every other class of Protection, it was absurd to obstruct the perfect working of Free Trade by maintaining Protection for the benefit of the shipowners alone. Moreover, it was necessary to establish a free shipping trade in Canada, to compensate her for the loss of the protective duty on corn. Mr. Labouchere ultimately struck out the clauses relating

to the coasting trade for purely fiscal reasons, and a masterly speech from Sir James Graham, on the 23rd of October, carried the third reading of the measure, which crowned the edifice of Free Trade. In the House of Lords the narrow majorities in favour of the Government rendered the last dying struggle of the Protectionists rather exciting. They declared that the Bishops carried the Bill, and the Earl of Winchelsea warned the Prelates that if they voted on secular questions in such a fashion they would be allowed to send only "a chosen few" to the Upper House, who would be permitted to speak and vote solely on religious questions. Though the Protectionists were defeated, they were not daunted. Organised under the active and restless leadership of Mr. Disraeli, they harassed the Government at every point. But their grand attack was made on the 8th of March, when Mr. Disraeli brought forward a resolution proposing to throw a portion of local burdens on the Imperial taxation of the country. This proposal he defended as a fair compensation to the agricultural interest for the loss of Protective duties on Corn. Finance was never Mr. Disraeli's strong point, and, as Mr. Hume observed, it was not easy to see how the farmers would profit by an arrangement, which, by Mr. Disraeli's own showing, would impose on them an additional income-tax of £6,000,000. Moreover, it was only too obvious that if any relief were granted to the farmers, it would be speedily appropriated by the landlords in the shape of increased rent.

Ireland was quiet, but sullen and disaffected. Though there was no open rebellion in the country, the secret organisation of revolt still existed, and the Home Secretary felt that it would be necessary to renew the Bill suspending the Habeas Corpus Act. Sir George Grey brought forward a motion to this effect on the 6th of February, defending the proposal on the ground that it was purely a precautionary one, and that Lord Clarendon, who thought it necessary, could be trusted to use his powers with discretion. The weakness of the Government lay in their opposition to the Coercion Bill of 1846. Then they turned out Sir Robert Peel by refusing to vote for Coercion unaccompanied by remedial measures. "Where," asked the Peelites, sneeringly, "are the remedial measures which should accompany this Whig Bill?" Nevertheless, Peel generously supported the Ministry, ostensibly on the ground that Ireland must not be made the battle-ground of Party, really because he was determined, at all costs, to maintain in power a Ministry that would give his fiscal policy a fair trial, as against a Protectionist Ministry, whose primary aim would be to wreck it.

Yet a remedial measure had been introduced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the 7th of February, in a proposal to grant from the Imperial Exchequer £50,000 to thirty distressed Irish Poor Law Unions, of which twenty-one were utterly bankrupt. Most pitiful was the picture which Sir Charles Wood drew of Ireland in moving the grant. The potato crop had again failed. Pauperism had again increased. Ireland was being depopulated.

not so much by an emigration, as by an exodus. The landlords were sinking under the poor rates, and their estates, deserted by tenants who ran away without paying rent whenever they disposed of their crops,* were in many



INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

places lying waste and desolate. Mr. Hume protested against the never-ending system of grants in aid, but the Government carried their vote in its original form.

On the 1st of March Lord John Russell brought forward another Irish

* In the Life of the Prince Consort, by Sir T. Martin, there is a record of a curious conversation between the Prince and Lord Clarendon, giving a graphic description of rural Ireland at this time.

scheme. The Report of the Committee on the Irish Poor Law recommended that each Union should, by a sixpenny rate, raise a general fund for the relief of the poor in Ireland, which should be banked in the name of the Irish Paymaster of the Civil Service, and held at the disposal of Parliament. Lord John moved that the House go into Committee on this proposal on the 1st of March. A project to impose a new national tax on Ireland for



LORD ELGIN, GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA.

local purposes, without imposing the same in England, was an eccentric one to come from statesmen who regarded the Union as a reality, and not a sham. Logically it was unjust to tax the industry of Ulster in order to provide local grants in aid for Ireland, while the industry of the United Kingdom generally escaped taxation. The proposal was obstructed in various ways, the Ministerial defence being that Imperial taxation fell more lightly on Ireland than on England and Scotland. Money must be found for the relief of Irish pauperism somehow, and if not by this plan, then by an extension of the Income Tax to Ireland, which would be still less popular. The Peelites even were not at one, Lord Lincoln advocating the extension

of the Income Tax to Ireland, and Peel himself supporting the rate-in-aid scheme, not because he liked it, but because he believed that after what had been done for her, Ireland ought to make some special exertion to help herself, which would also have the effect of inducing England to co-operate with her in pushing on regenerative measures. Mr. Bright defended the grant-in-aid scheme, declaring, however, that the incurable evils of Ireland were traceable to her misgovernment by her landlords. But it is quite clear that Peel was the only politician on either side of the House who at this crisis had the penetration to see that the ills of Ireland were too desperate to be remedied by a pettifogging system of English doles and grants in aid. He stood alone in seeing that nothing less than a reform going to the root of Irish rural economy, would be of the slightest use, and in his speech he suggested that the best remedy would be to increase facilities for the transfer of land. From his ambiguous language one gathers that he had in contemplation some scheme by which the State should buy up the poverty-stricken tracts and plant them with solvent colonists, the plantations being managed by a Government Commission. As for the people, those who were not needed as labourers might be induced by the Commission to emigrate. Had he combined this project for one to give Ireland tenant-right, and had he persuaded Parliament to accept his ideas, there would probably have been no "Irish problem" to perplex us in the jubilee year of the Queen's reign. After wearisome debates the proposal of the Ministry was carried in both Houses, Government having made an advance of £100,000 to the impecunious Unions in anticipation of the Bill passing the Lords.

The next Irish measure was Sir John Romilly's Encumbered Estates Bill, introduced on the 26th of April. The Bill of the preceding Session had failed to work because its machinery—that is, the Court of Chancery—was too cumbrous. Romilly's idea was to substitute for the Court a Commission, which should conduct the business of land transfer unfettered by the clumsy procedure or the heavy fees of Chancery. His speech was a masterpiece of exposition, and Mr. Bright expressed the prevailing opinion when he said he accepted the Bill as the harbinger of better legislation for Ireland. It passed both Houses without serious opposition.

It has been said that the sudden pressure of the Poor Law on the mortgaged estates of Ireland nearly ruined the Irish gentry. The Queen and Prince Albert were deeply distressed by painful accounts of the sufferings of this class which reached them. The Prince, indeed, drew up a memorandum for Sir George Grey, pointing out very sensibly the injustice of the existing law. A good landlord spent his substance in improving his estate, and in finding or making work for his labourers. A bad landlord kept his money in his pocket, and when his labourers, unable to earn wages, began to starve, he threw them on the rates. But both landlords paid the same poor rate, so that the good landlord not only taxed himself through his improvements to keep his own

workmen from idleness, but was taxed through the Union, to support the unemployed workmen of the bad and non-improving landlord. The idea of the Queen and her husband was that the pressure of the rate should be eased on good landlords who made sacrifices to keep their labourers in work and wages. Sir George Grey submitted the project to the Cabinet, and then told Prince Albert that it would have to be abandoned, for nobody could embody it in a practical Bill. This did not show that the idea was bad, but merely that Whig constructive statesmanship at that time was feeble, not to say incompetent. But the glaring fact remained that the application of the Elizabethan Poor Law to Ireland was bringing ruin to the rich, and doing but little to fend off starvation from the poor. Property was simply unable to support the mass of pauperism that was suddenly cast on it for maintenance. Some modifications in the law must be proposed, if the whole system—upheld as it was solely by grants in aid from England—was not to break down completely. Lord John Russell accordingly proposed, on the 26th of April, a Bill to limit the liability of Irish land for poor rates, by fixing a maximum beyond which the rate could not be increased. The proposal was carried in the Commons, but in the House of Lords the maximum rate clause was struck out. This was an infringement of the privileges of the Lower House, for the Peers have no right to alter a Bill sent up by the Commons fixing rates or taxes. Yet it was almost impossible for the Peers to handle any Poor Law Bill without trenching on this privilege, and hence it was proposed that the House of Commons should formally waive its privileges in regard to this Bill in order to let it be set down for reconsideration.* Precedents existed in favour of this course, but Sir James Graham very cogently observed that it was bad public policy to be perpetually adding to precedents, waiving the absolute and exclusive right of the Commons to control fiscal legislation, and he ingeniously suggested another way out of the difficulty. This was to throw the Bill out in the meantime, and re-introduce it afresh with the Lords' Amendments embodied in it. The suggestion was negatived, and the Bill reconsidered, the Lords' Amendments being for the most part adopted. The failure of the Government to provide a guarantee for meeting any deficit that might exist after a maximum rate had been levied, had proved fatal to the maximum rate clause.

On the 4th of May Ireland again came before the country as the incorrigible mendicant of Parliament. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, having prefaced his proposals with the usual commonplace that "the present desideratum in Ireland was employment," moved that further advances should be made under the Land Improvement Act to enable employers to provide work for the people. In addition to what still remained to be disbursed by former advances, Sir C. Wood proposed that £300,000 be granted, thus bringing

* This was done, as a matter of fact, on three previous occasions—the Irish Municipal Bill (1834), and the Irish Poor Law Bills of 1838 and 1847.

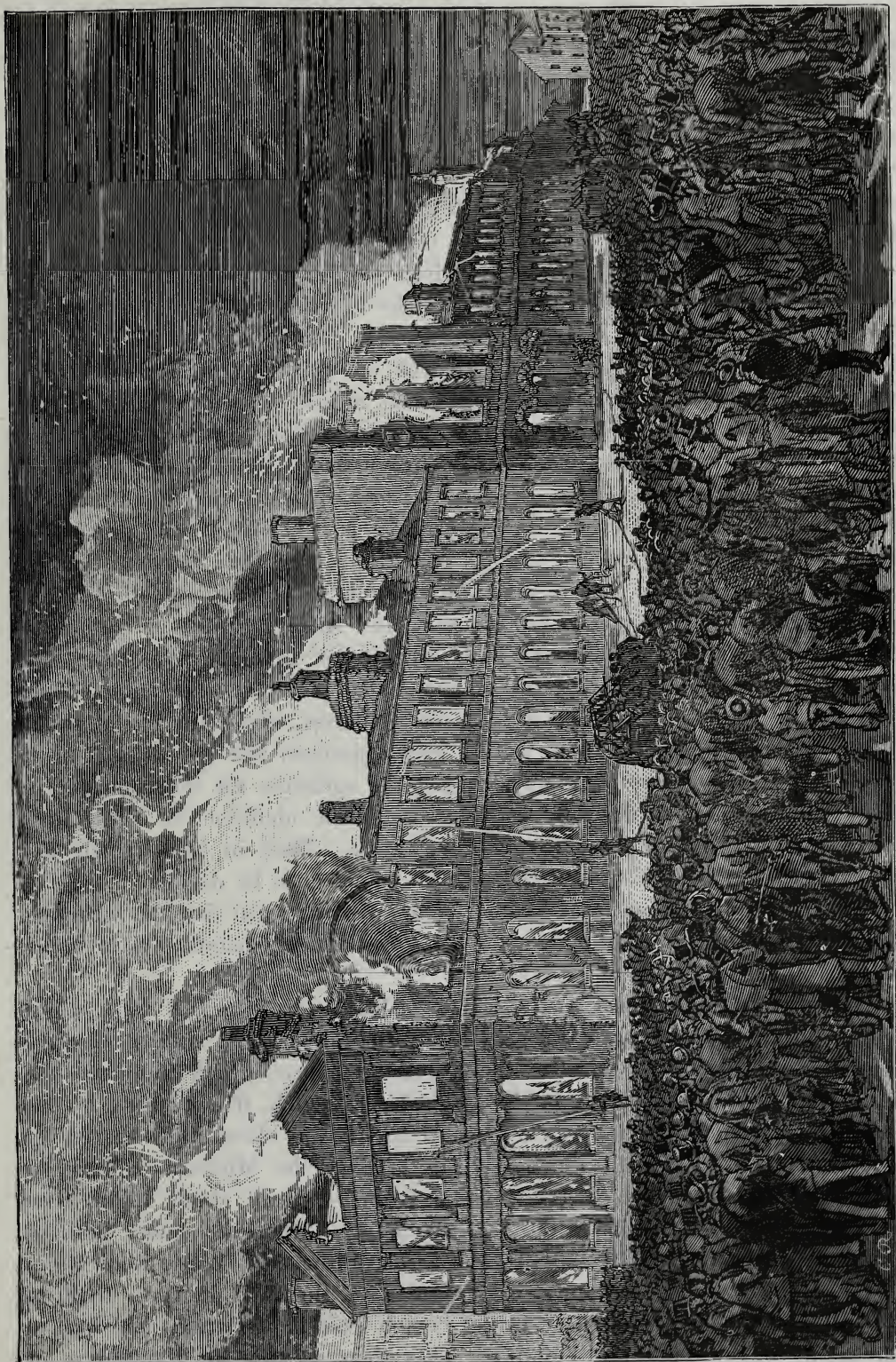
the total available subsidy to £1,252,000. Besides this sum, he proposed to advance £200,000 for the further development of arterial drainage. A feeble protest was made against this fresh development of an eleemosynary policy. The system of permitting Government loans to be jobbed away by the Department of Public Works in Ireland had, it was said, caused a large proportion of the money voted to be absorbed in extravagant official estimates.



RIOTS IN MONTREAL: LORD ELGIN STONED BY THE MOB.

But all objections were over-ruled, and Sir C. Wood's proposal was accepted in the long-run.

Next to Ireland, the burning question of the Session was that of Colonial policy. Most Englishmen were profoundly ignorant about their Colonies. A strong school of politicians, headed by Mr. Bright and Mr. Cobden, and after them by Professor Goldwin Smith, taught that the best thing that could be done with a Colony was to get rid of it, as a costly encumbrance, so that Englishmen who were not ignorant were somewhat indifferent about Colonial policy. The result was naturally that the Colonial Office was free to blunder in its Administration without running any great risk of detection or punishment—and it had made affluent use of this privilege. Suddenly, in 1849, England became keenly interested in her distant possessions. Debates on emigration, and the demand for financial retrenchment, had alike stimulated



RIOTS IN MONTREAL: BURNING OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

this interest, and it began to dawn upon the House of Commons that a bad Colonial policy might mean bad Budgets. The first sign of this feeling was given by Mr. Bailie, who in February brought forward a motion for an inquiry into the conduct of the Governments of Ceylon and Guiana. His attack was general as well as particular. In brief, he declared that the Colonial Office oppressed the Colonies and wasted their revenues in extravagant expenditure, and he urged that the time had come for Colonial autonomy. Lord Torrington's fiscal eccentricities had driven Ceylon to rebellion, which had been suppressed with shocking barbarity. The Colonial Office—in other words, Lord Grey—by opposing financial reforms in Demerara, had rendered it discontented. A feeble Amendment, moved by Mr. Ricardo, extending the scope of the proposed investigation into the means by which the Colonies might best meet the difficulties of the transition from Protection to Free Trade, was all the opposition Mr. Bailie encountered. The attempt to defend the financial maladministration of the Colonies by declaring that it was a corollary of Free Trade failed, and Mr. Bailie's Committee was appointed. Just before Parliament was prorogued, Mr. Hume drew the attention of the House to the evidence it had then accumulated as to Guiana, and moved that the expenditure of the Colony be reduced, and some measure of autonomy granted to it. The fault with the administration of Demerara was this:—for ten years it had been carried on extravagantly in direct opposition to the views of the elected representatives of the Colonists, who were for a policy of financial retrenchment. The motion was negatived, but the debate on it did good. It is perhaps right to say that the agitation for retrenchment in these Colonies was considerably stimulated by the abolition of Protection. Free Trade cut down the profits of the planters. They in turn angrily demanded that the salaries of Colonial officials should also be docked.

Early in May the Queen was grievously annoyed to learn that the turbulent Canadians were again threatening to rebel. Parliament, therefore, soon found itself discussing a Canadian question.

After the rebellion in Canada, which ended in 1838, a Bill was passed giving compensation to loyal sufferers in Upper Canada. A similar measure was demanded for Lower Canada—the French province—which had been the seat of the insurrection. As it was argued that much, if not most, of the compensation would find its way into rebel hands, the claim was resisted by “the British Party” in the province. But in 1848 the Ministry—a Tory, or “British” Ministry—was ejected. The Governor-General (Lord Elgin) then formed another Cabinet out of the “French Party,” who, of course, brought in and passed an Indemnity Bill for the Lower Province. When Lord Elgin went to the House of Assembly, in Montreal, on the 25th of April, 1849, to give this Bill his sanction, the “British” mob rose in its wrath, and stoned him as he was leaving the building. They then set fire to the House of Assembly itself, and burned it to the ground in a frenzy of loyalty to British

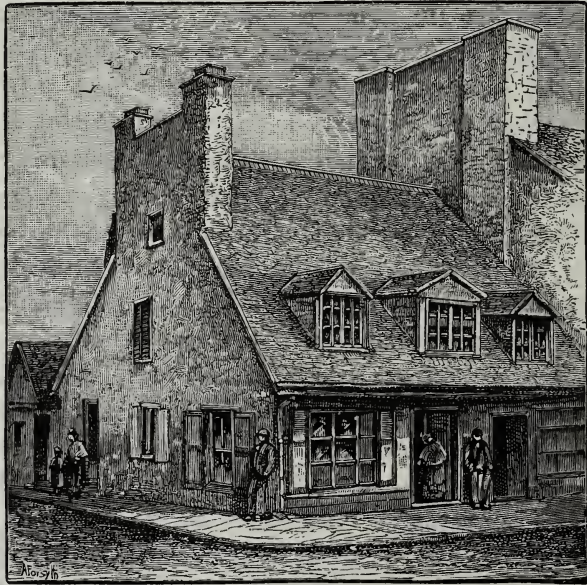
interests. Troops were promptly called out, and the disaffected accordingly adopted the less violent course of petitioning the Queen to recall Lord Elgin and veto the obnoxious Bill. The "British Party" gradually cooled down, but throughout the year they remained very sulky, vainly endeavouring to persuade themselves to secede to the United States. The condition of the Colony was, in truth, not such as to stimulate its loyalty. It had lost the benefit which it had enjoyed from privileged access to a protected English market. Its finances were disordered. Its stagnation and decay were in startling contrast to the prosperity and progress of the New England States of the American Republic. The form of its provincial Government was cumbrous, inciting to political feuds; and then—worst of all—in the mother country, Manchester Radicals persistently incited the Canadians to secede, by promulgating the doctrine that British Colonies not only benefited by independence, but were, whilst in the dependent state, a source of trouble and expense to the English taxpayer.

The whole question came before the House of Commons more than once. On the 14th of June the Rebellion Losses Bill was fiercely attacked by Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons as a measure for rewarding rebels. Some years afterwards Mr. Gladstone made a kind of apology for his onslaught; but even then he quite misunderstood the true meaning and bearing of Lord Elgin's policy.* Mr. Herries moved an Address calling on the Queen to veto the Bill. For two nights it was attacked; but Sir Robert Peel's intervention routed the opposition, for he pointed out that the measure could not possibly give compensation, as Mr. Gladstone alleged, to any one who was shown to be a rebel, and that it was only, as Lord Elgin said, the logical sequence of other measures of the sort, which had been passed without opposition. His strongest point, however, was that to reject the Bill would be taken as an insult to the Colony, and an encroachment on its right of self-government. Mr. Herries lost his motion by a majority of 141. In the House of Lords, however, the attack was renewed by Lord Brougham, and but for the timely aid of three proxies the Government would have been beaten by him. The curious thing to note is the calmative influence of this firm and resolute attitude of the Government and Parliament on the Colony. The Tory Party in Canada up till then had strained every effort, Lord Elgin writes in one of his letters, to drive him to a *coup d'état*. They had breathed nothing but rebellion and slaughter for months. The moment Parliament gently snubbed them, however, they were quieted as if by magic, and their organs began to write articles declaiming against the practice of abusing the French, with whom, in the long-run, the Tory or English Party were bound to live in amity.

During this crisis nothing could be worthier of the occasion than the

* Memoir of James, eighth Earl of Elgin, edited by Theodore Walrond, with a Preface by A. P. Stanley, Chap. IV., pp. 70 *et seq.*

courage, the coolness, the dignity, and resolute forbearance of Lord Elgin. As he says in one of his letters, he stood literally alone. He was accused of cowardice because he did not quench the revolt in blood; and even Lord John Russell and Lord Grey, though they defended him, thought the logic of the case was against him. He was, they argued, either right or wrong. If the latter, he ought to be recalled; if the former, he ought to avenge by force of arms the insult offered to the Queen in his person. But Elgin's policy was justified by the result. This was that 700,000 rebellious French subjects of the Queen were reconciled to her Government, not because they were bribed by compensation grants, for no actual rebel got any, but because they had a striking proof given to them that to "be just and fear not" was the keynote of the British Governor-General's policy and administration.



OLD FRENCH HOUSE, QUEBEC.





